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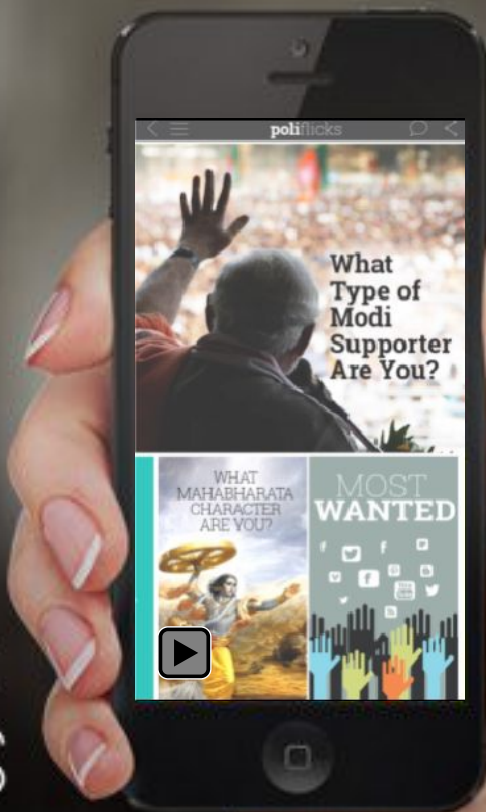


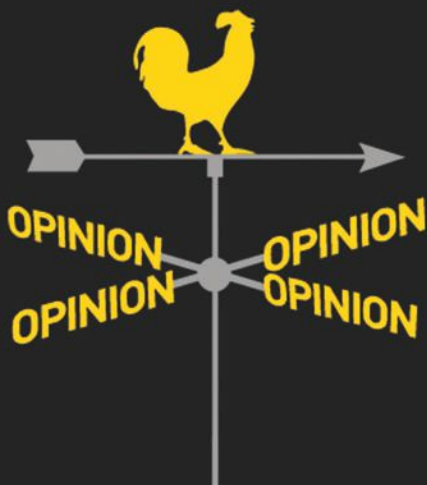
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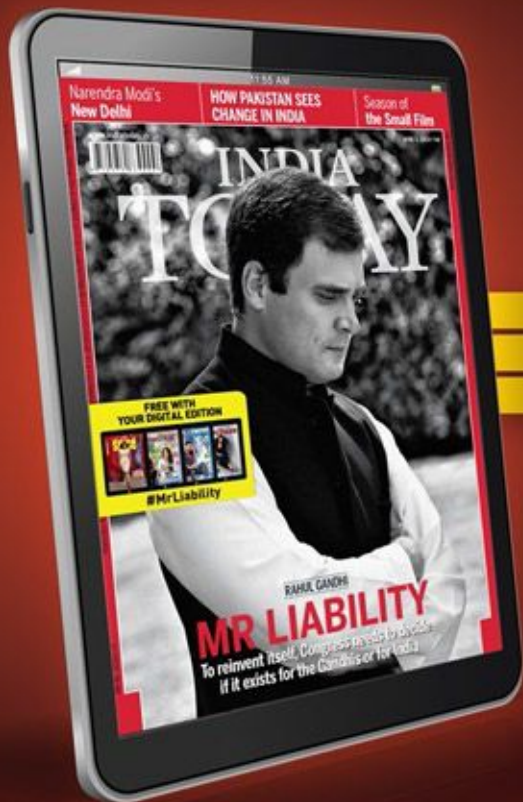


Changing the way you live now will help you bolster your immunity and stay disease-free as you age. p 80



On Our Cover:
Enjoy the fruit of the season with a healthy twist. Check out p 126 for yummy, nutrient-packed desserts.
Cover design: Manish Verma
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Prevention

Volume 9 Number 4

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■ PUBLISHED AND PRINTED by Sanjay Thapar on behalf of Living Media India Limited. Printed at Thomson Press India Limited 18 - 35, Milestone, Delhi-Mathura Road, Faridabad -121 007, (Haryana). Published at K-9, Connaught Circus, New Delhi-110 001.

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SOUKYA: Where Wellness Meets Medicine

Getting healthy is a holistic effort. Believing in the need for integrative medicine is SOUKYA, which offers both wellness programmes and medical treatments to boost health and prevent ailments. With medical-ly-qualified doctors on board, SOUKYA welcomes patrons who want to improve the quality of life, as well as patients on a lookout for ways to restore their health.

INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

At SOUKYA, medical programmes are tailor-made for every individual. Each programme starts with an evaluation to determine the mental, physical and spiritual state of the individual. Following this, a holistic plan with treatments from each discipline is made. A thorough blood analysis and daily consultation is done to assess the progress of the patient, and to intervene when required. Medication is prescribed



from Ayurveda and homeopathy. This is done to manage various medical conditions like arthritis, spondylitis, diabetes, hypertension, neurological disorders, fibromyalgia and so on. After leaving the centre, the state of the patient is closely monitored through telephonic and e-mail consultations.

Lifestyle modifications are also advised and taught for speedy recovery, and to prevent further diseases and restore health.

A SEA OF WELLNESS

The wellness programmes at SOUKYA

consist of treatments that aid with repair and rejuvenation of cells. From weight loss to anti-ageing and de-stress to detox—each programme is customised to suit individual needs, and takes a cue from naturopathy and Ayurveda, as well as complimentary therapies like acupuncture and acupressure.

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Editor's Letter

Green Your Home

As I look out the window, I can see rolling fields, dotted with palm trees.

Beyond them, surfing waves lash the beach all day long. I'm writing to you from Goa where we're on a family vacation. The monsoons have arrived here, everything is lush and beautiful. It rains all day, then, when evening comes, the sun colours up the horizon in a riot of orange before it slides into the grey Arabian Sea.

It's only when you get away from the city that you know how much you needed to. As we travel through the sleepy villages in this coastal state, we smell the rain-soaked earth, the green around us washes over us, we breathe. This is how it was supposed to be.

This is why the Japanese swear by *Shinrin Yoku* or forest bathing. The air and smells of the forest have a healing effect not just on our mind and soul but our overall health too. Studies show that being in touch with nature creates a calming effect, through changes in our nervous system and also raises the level of the hormone adiponectin. Low levels of this hormone is linked with obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and metabolic syndrome. Every study on forest bathing conducted so far has shown reduced stress, anger, anxiety, depression and sleeplessness amongst participants. Not surprising that in Japan there are now 44 accredited *Shinrin Yoku* forests!

But let's get real: how often can we bathe in the forest or get away to a virgin beach? While we should seize every opportunity to find the stillness of nature, what if we recreated it in our own spaces? Our special feature *The Blueprint for a Healthy Home* this month offers a bunch of ideas that will help you make your home greener and cleaner (p 98). Try them, you will see what a difference it makes to your daily life.

This issue also has a report on how to give muscle to your immunity (p 80). There's enough evidence to show that a superhero-level immune system will not just help you avoid seasonal bugs, but also help you live longer and healthier. At *Prevention* we never recommend sweeping changes: adopt the simple tweaks, incorporating some essential foods and natural healers and you're sorted!

Talking about food, we've all seen how messy the instant noodle issue got recently. We have for you some expert advice to clear your doubts on p 30. At *Prevention*, eating clean and living toxin-free have always been a big priority, but we go beyond the hype every month to bring you information and expert advice on sustainable living. Stay tuned for the best advice on green and clean living.

Let's all promise to make this planet better for us and our children.



Sanghamitra

Sanghamitra Chakraborty
Editorial Director

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INDIA
TODAY

SAFAIGIRI

Summit & Awards 2015

Sometimes, all it
takes is a small push
to bring about a
sweeping change.

Readers' Letters

A Family Staple

I can't remember when I started reading *Prevention*, and I cannot forget how it has changed my life. Both my daughter and I eagerly wait for the magazine each month. Every feature is worth reading and is full of must-follow advice. Whenever I feel low and crave some friendly advice, I just pick out a *Prevention* issue and get my solutions. Thank you team, for the amazing stories you churn out and wish you luck for the future.

—Alpana Saxena via e-mail



Delightful Read

The May issue was a real delight—from the delicious ice lollies to the refreshing cold chunks of bright-red watermelon. Couldn't have asked for a better way to beat the searing heat. However, all the travails of summer-at-its-peak were forgotten as I ravenously dug into the 140-page juicy issue—not once, twice but thrice! Thanks to the entire *Prevention* staff for whetting my appetite; I look forward to a second helping soon.

—Roopa Khurana
via e-mail



A NEW FIND

I recently picked up the June issue of *Prevention*, my first brush with the magazine, and realised how ignorant I had been about my own body. As I read through all the research, I couldn't stop marvelling at the simple, handy solutions to beat back illness. Besides the small news pages, the cover story *The Queen Of Ace* made an inspiring read not only for me, but also for many youngsters. I absolutely loved the articles *Beat Alzheimer's at its Own Game* and *Fire Up Metabolism Together*. I am extremely happy that I came across the magazine and curiosity made me pick it up, as I will follow every issue from now on.

—B Ajit via e-mail

This letter
wins a special
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GET IN TOUCH

We look forward to getting to know you better! Send us your comments, questions or ideas: Write to us at askprevention@intoday.com, or Editor, *Prevention*, 3rd Floor, Film City-8, Sector 16A, NOIDA, UP-201301.

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Prevention
TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR HEALTH

Ask Prevention

Q Is there anything I can do to reduce pain when I have to wear heels?

A: Although prolonged use of heels is not recommended, there are occasions when you have to wear them. In such situations, you can reduce your discomfort by following these steps. Start with wearing heels for as little time as possible and stick to heels that are no higher than 1.5-2 inches. You can train your muscles in a way that they don't pain afterwards. How? Here's a suggestion by Dr Pradeep Moonot, orthopaedic surgeon, Breach Candy Hospital, Mumbai: "Stand bare-foot at arm's length facing a wall. Step forward with your right foot; keep both feet flat on the floor. Place your hands on the wall at chest-height. Press your right knee towards the wall so you feel a stretch in your left calf. Hold for a few seconds, then release the stretch. That's one rep. Do 8 reps per leg before and after wearing your heels."



Q: Is it safe to swim in public pools during my periods?

A: "It is best to avoid swimming in public pools during your menstrual cycle," says Dr Duru Shah, scientific director of Gynaecworld and the Gynaecworld Assisted Fertility Center, Mumbai. Shah adds that we're at a higher risk of catching infections during periods and should take care of vaginal hygiene. "This increased vulnerability to infections happens because of a change in the vaginal pH from acidic to alkaline during menstruation," explains Shah.



Q I have very brittle nails which keep breaking. Please suggest a remedy.

A: There can be many reasons behind your brittle nails—from psoriasis to fungal infections, excess water exposure, hypothyroidism and anaemia. All these require different treatments. “Before you resort to solutions for any other cause, you must rule out fungal infections and hypothyroidism as these require specific medication,” says Dr Chytra V Anand, consultant cosmetic dermatologist, Kosmoderma Clinics, Bengaluru. “The best way to prevent your nails from splitting is by keeping them dry and moisturised. Moisturise your nails and surrounding skin with warm coconut or olive oil at night to make them stronger,” adds Anand. “You can consult a dermatologist for biotin and zinc supplements that provide strength to your nails. However, if you are anaemic, consult your GP for iron supplements to improve your iron count,” she says.



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REDUCE THIS

> More reason to reduce your carb intake. A 2013 study published in the journal *PLOS One* found people who ate loads of carb-rich foods were more susceptible to yeast infections than people who munched on foods high in proteins, amino acids and fatty acids.



BLUSH FIX

> The secret to a perfect blush? Always mix a blush with a bronzer. Take a medium-size blush brush with tapered bristles and swirl it into the blush first, followed by bronzer. Now brush it onto your right cheek, then your left. Repeat the process—but this time start with the left cheek, then the right, so the products offer even coverage.

womenshealthmag.com



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ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

DR ISSAC MATHAI, medical director, SOUKYA International Holistic Health Centre, Bengaluru.

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DR K SRINATH REDDY, president, Public Health Foundation of India, New Delhi. A consultant with the WHO, he is considered a global authority in his field.

DERMATOLOGY

DR REKHA SHETH, is a leading cosmetic dermatologist in Mumbai. She is founder-president, Cosmetology Society of India and runs Yuva, a successful chain of skin clinics.

ENDOCRINOLOGY

DR AMBRISH MITHAL, chairman, Division of Endocrinology and Diabetes, Medanta-The Medicity, Gurgaon. He is also chairperson, Bone and Joint Decade-India.

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ENT

DR ARUN AGGARWAL, is director, ENT Department, Maulana Azad Medical College, New Delhi. He is also deputy director general, health services and president Delhi Medical Council.

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NISHA VARMA, Pune-based Reebok University Master Trainer, yoga instructor and an aqua instructor certified by the Federation of International Sports, Aerobics and Fitness, Singapore.

VINATA SHETTY, Mumbai-based Reebok University Master Trainer. She is also a certified trainer from the American College of Sports Medicine.

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DR INDIRA HINDUJA, consultant gynaecologist, Jaslok Hospital and Hinduja Hospital, Mumbai. Dr Hinduja gave India its first GIFT baby in 1988.

DR DURU SHAH, chairman of Gynaecworld and Gynaecworld Fertility Clinic, Mumbai.

DR PUNEET BEDI, consultant, Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, New Delhi.

GASTROENTEROLOGY

DR RAJIV KHOSLA, senior consultant, gastroenterology, Max Super Speciality and Holy Family Hospital, New Delhi. He also runs a special clinic for IBD at Medanta-The Medicity, Gurgaon.

GERIATRICS

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LABORATORY MEDICINE

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DR PRABHA CHANDRA, professor of psychiatry, NIMHANS, Bengaluru. She specialises in post-natal depression.

DR VIJAY NAGASWAMI, psychiatrist, relationship consultant and author of a series on Indian marriages, Chennai.

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DR RAJSHEKHAR REDDI, principal consultant and head of unit, Neurology, Max Super Speciality Hospital, New Delhi.

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DR KAMALA KRISHNASWAMY former president, Nutrition Society of India and a council member of the International

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DR SH ADVANI, director, Medical Oncology, Jaslok Hospital & Research Centre, and chief medical oncologist at the Asian Institute of Oncology, Mumbai.

DR RAJENDRA KERKAR professor and head, Department of Gynaecological Oncology at Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai.

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DR ASHOK RAJGOPAL, chairman of Medanta Bone & Joint Institute, Medanta-The Medicity, Gurgaon.

PAEDIATRICS

DR ARVIND TANEJA, advisor and senior consultant, Paediatrics, Max Healthcare, New Delhi. Recipient of the 'Distinguished Physician' award of the Delhi Medical Association.

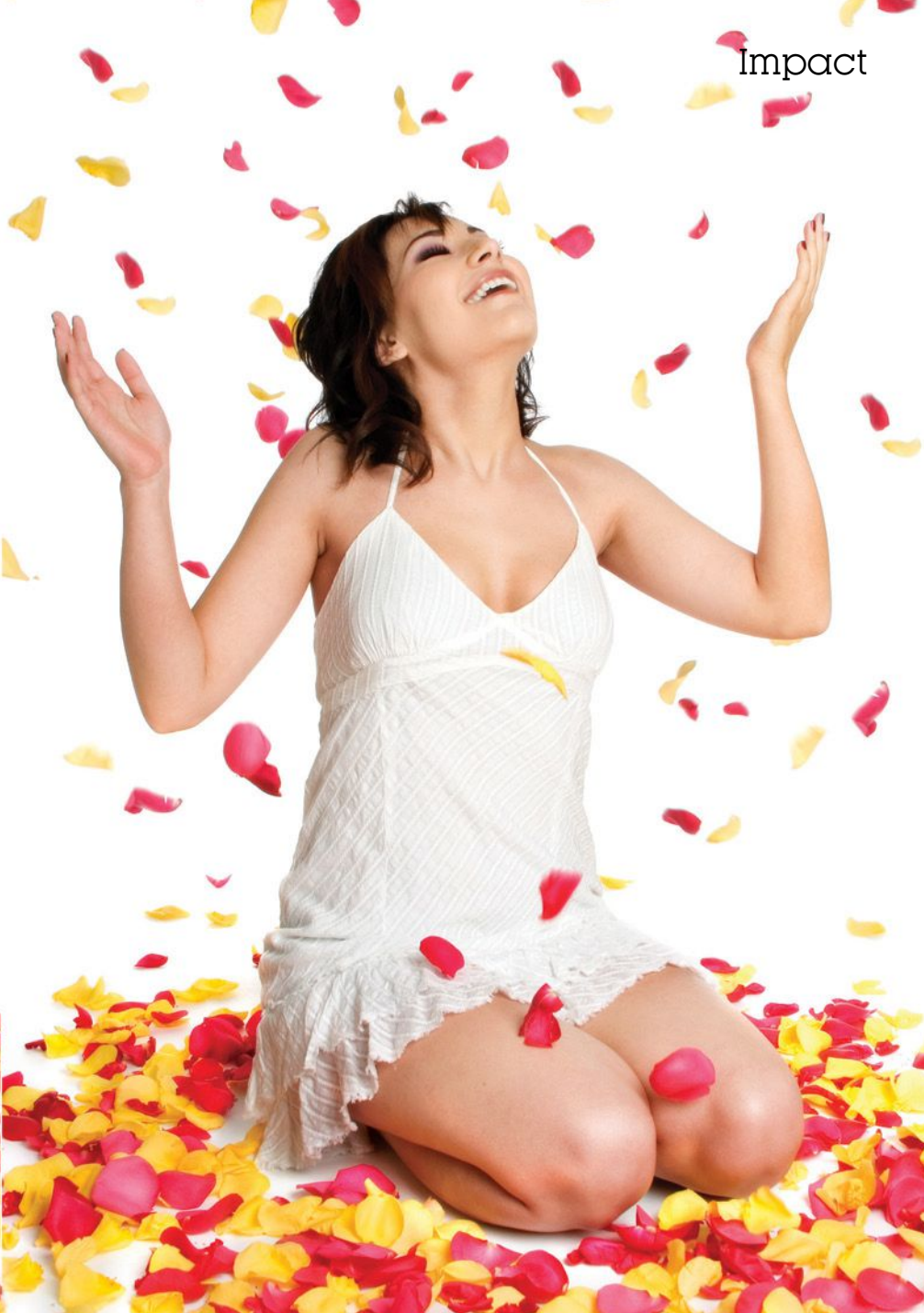
DR PROF ANUPAM SIBAL, group medical director, Apollo Hospitals. He is also an adjunct professor of Paediatrics at the University of Queensland. His specialisation is paediatric gastroenterology and hepatology.



What Your Antidote to Stress Smells Like

Forget the naysayers: there may be a good, scientific reason we love receiving a delivery of fresh roses—their scent jump-starts activity in the parasympathetic nervous system, the antidote to our fight-or-flight response, says a study in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. To calm down on a day when a bouquet isn't on the way, spritz perfume with rose essential oil, which, research shows, may have a similar calming effect. Bonus: rose essential oil has been used to ease stress, grief and sadness.

Impact



Health

Cancer • Sleep • Back pain

Fight Cancer With Exercise

A cancer diagnosis can lead to depression, making recovery more difficult. Challenging oneself with exercise goals – whether it's hitting a set of minutes-per-week or targeting a 6k race – can help cancer patients psychologically. A recent study published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* found that there also are physical pathways by which exercise can improve cancer outcomes. Kansas State University exercise physiologist Brad Behnke, who has been studying prostate-cancer tumour growth in rats, found that exercise bathes a tumour in oxygen and slows down its activity and growth. Another study found that aerobic exercise can help the tissue return to pre-tumour state/forestall the development of an aggressive cancer in human breast tumours. Besides, better blood flow and oxygen to a tumour can potentially increase the supply of cancer-fighting therapies to it, making treatment more successful. – *Kathakoli Dasgupta*



A Pain in the... SACK?



Talk about a mood killer: a large majority of women with lower-back pain have sex less often as a result of their discomfort. Good thing researchers at Waterloo University ID'd the best ache-relieving positions to keep the loving alive (no ice packs necessary).

If your pain gets worse when you touch your toes or sit for long periods, try making love in a neutral spine position, supporting yourself on your **HANDS AND KNEES** (not your elbows).

If arching your back or lying on your stomach hurts, try **MISSIONARY** with a pillow under your back so your spine is in as neutral a position as possible.

A general note for all back-pain sufferers (men included): When you're controlling the motion, use your **KNEES AND HIPS** (rather than your spine) to minimise potential discomfort.

40%

That's how much **lower the risk of cardiovascular disease** is for people who eat fruit daily, compared with those who never do, according to new research. Take note, low-carb-fanatics-turned-fruit-phobics.

Source: Huaidong Du, senior research fellow, Nuffield Department of Population Health at the University of Oxford in the UK

Your Body Starved of Sleep

If you regularly miss the 7-hour mark, morning crankiness is the least of your worries. Here are 6 good reasons to put away the tablet/smartphone/whatever is keeping you up and hit the sheets.



Weight Gain

Sleeping fewer than 6 hours pushes up obesity risk by 30%. One study found that women who slept fewer than 5 hours ate 329 more calories the next day.

Poor Immunity

People who sleep fewer than 7 hours are nearly 3 times more likely to catch a cold.

Diabetes

Skimping on deep sleep can reduce the body's sensitivity to insulin, taking up your risk of type 2 diabetes.

Brain Fog

Missing out on as few as 1½ hours of sleep can reduce daytime alertness by up to 32%. (Bet you knew that one already.)

Lousy Heart Health

Getting 6 or fewer hours of shut-eye over the long term increases your risk of developing—or dying of—heart disease by 48%.

Blood Pressure Problems

Snoozing just 6 hours a night makes you 20% more likely to develop high blood pressure.

HRT Alert!



Hormone replacement therapy used to ease severe menopause symptoms can increase ovarian cancer risk significantly, according to a recent study in *Lancet*. Using HRT, even for less than 5 years, was linked with an elevated risk of ovarian cancer, and this increased risk was detectable for 10 years after stopping therapy. Using HRT for 5 years was responsible for one extra case of ovarian cancer per 1,000 women. So, do a thorough weigh-in of the pros and cons with your doc before you consider it.

65%

Is the increased risk of death among people who are sedentary for 10 hours or more in a day. Aim to reduce total sitting time through the day.

»
*fact
or
rumour*

We should help a person stand up on his feet immediately after a fainting spell, right?

NO, you should not. The underlying cause of a fainting spell is a momentary drop in blood supply to the brain. In most cases, the episode, known as syncope, lasts for a minute or two, and the victim recovers quickly from it. When one faints and falls, the head is on the same level as the body serving as a corrective mechanism. The blood flows easily to the brain and re-establishes the lost connection. Helping the patient sit up hampers this normal recovery process. Rather, help him lie down straight and prop up his feet (so the head is at a lower position) to aid blood circulation. Heart rhythm problems may be a reason behind syncope, so get him examined by a cardiologist. — **Dr T S Kler**, executive director, Cardiac Sciences, Fortis Escorts Heart Institute & Research Centre, New Delhi.



Beauty

Nailcare • Label Intel

This Frizz Fix Is Elementary

Knowing an acid from a base does matter beyond chemistry class after all: a new study in the *International Journal of Trichology* reports that your shampoo's pH could make or break your hair day. Formulas with an alkaline pH can trigger frizz by chemically roughing up the hair's surface and increasing friction between strands, leaving them less manageable and more prone to breakage. Pick shampoos labelled 'low pH' or 'pH balancing': Biotique Bio Soya Protein Fresh Nourishing Shampoo, ₹159, or brands like OGX are options. These brands claim that all their shampoos and conditioners are pH-balanced.



Shampoos with a pH that's slightly acidic or neutral smoothens hair by helping the cuticle lie flat.

1. YOU FORGET TO TAKE A NAIL POLISH HOLIDAY

Wearing coloured polish for 7+ days can result in dry, rough patches. "Plus, dark colours attract sunlight and cause damage to the nail bed," says Dr Apratim Goel, Cutis Skin Studio, Mumbai. So take a polish break and use Natio Aromatherapy Antioxidant Hand & Nail Cream, ₹596.

4. YOU'RE NOT PICKY ENOUGH ABOUT NAIL POLISH REMOVER

"Even brands of nail polish remover that claim to be acetone free have trace amount of the solvent," says Dr Vandana Chatrath, dermatologist, Kubba Clinic, New Delhi. "That said, these variants make your nail plate less dry." Try the non-acetone Colorbar Nail Enamel Remover, ₹125.

2. YOU TYPE NON-STOP

Tapping at a screen or keyboard places pressure on the tips of too-long nails, leading to splitting and fraying. Prevent problems by trimming nails so the tips don't extend past the fingers' fleshy ends.

3. YOU DON'T MOISTURISE ENOUGH

Nail growth begins well below the cuticle and if the skin there is dry, the nail will be prone to splitting, breaking and cracking. Apply a hand cream such as the non-sticky Marks & Spencer Floral Collection Lavender Moisturising Hand & Nail Cream, ₹199.

For an intense dose of moisture, Goel suggests dipping your fingers in warm oil for 15 minutes.

Your Cheat Sheet to Gorgeous Nails

Nails may be tough, but they're not immune to the ageing process. Avoid these 4 surprising mistakes and younger-looking tips can be yours.



1



2



3



4



5

Face Time

From make-up to skincare, here are 5 picks for you.

BY MEGHNA KRIPLANI

1. Foundation Check: Keep your daily make-up light, by skipping foundation and investing in a primer like the M.A.C Mineralize Timecheck Lotion. It promises to reduce the appearance of wrinkles and enlarged pores. Use a moisturising cream before slathering it on. **₹3,200**

2. Cushiony Comfort: Not a fan of heavy foundation? Give cushion foundations a try. They convert liquid into emulsion, ensuring the formula doesn't weigh your skin down. The Innisfree Cushion Foundation comes in 2 variants—Long Wear, meant for oily to combination skin; and Water Glow for dry skin. **₹1,700** each

3. Overnight Rejuvenation: Want youthful skin? Try The Body Shop Drops of Youth Bouncy Sleeping Mask, which is formulated with the anti-oxidant rich edelweiss

stem cells. Apply a very small quantity (this is a heavy cream masque, so you may not want to use more than a levelled scoop of the spatula provided) evenly across your face, 15 minutes before hitting the hay. Wash off in the morning. **₹2,295**

4. Natural Remedy: Give your skin a break from the heat with the Jaypore Neem Chandalan Mud Mask. With Fuller's earth and clay, it cleanses and absorbs excess oil from the face, while sandalwood cools the skin. **₹375; jaypore.com**

5. Day Care: With pollution levels at an all-time high, you need more than just sunscreen when you step out. The Clarins UV Plus Multi-Protection Day Screen SPF 50/PA ++++ claims to fight fine lines and other signs of ageing, like the loss of radiance, caused by pollution. **₹2,750** [↗](#)

ONE-WORD ANSWER

Should I really avoid skincare products with parabens?

yes.

The common preservative methylparaben, often used in anti-agers, reduced collagen levels—and the skin cells' ability to generate more—in a new study. Mega doses gave mice drier, more wrinkled skin and are likely to have a similar effect in humans, since our skin is structurally similar. Nix the threat by checking for the preservative or picking products that say “paraben-free” or “PABA-free” on the label.

Sources: Rachel Nazarian, MD, assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai Medical Center, US; Investigative Dermatology

This Skin-care Claim Doesn't Hold Water

The term “water-free” is being bandied about on product labels as though it's a big-time benefit. Get the low-down.

THE CLAIM: Proponents of the no-H₂O movement claim that anti-ageing superstars like anti-oxidants and retinols are lipid soluble—and therefore are more effectively delivered to our skin cells in formulas that use oil instead of water.

THE REALITY: Lipid-favouring ingredients

can be tweaked in labs to play just as well with H₂O and deliver equally effective outcomes, says US-based cosmetic chemist Ron Robinson.

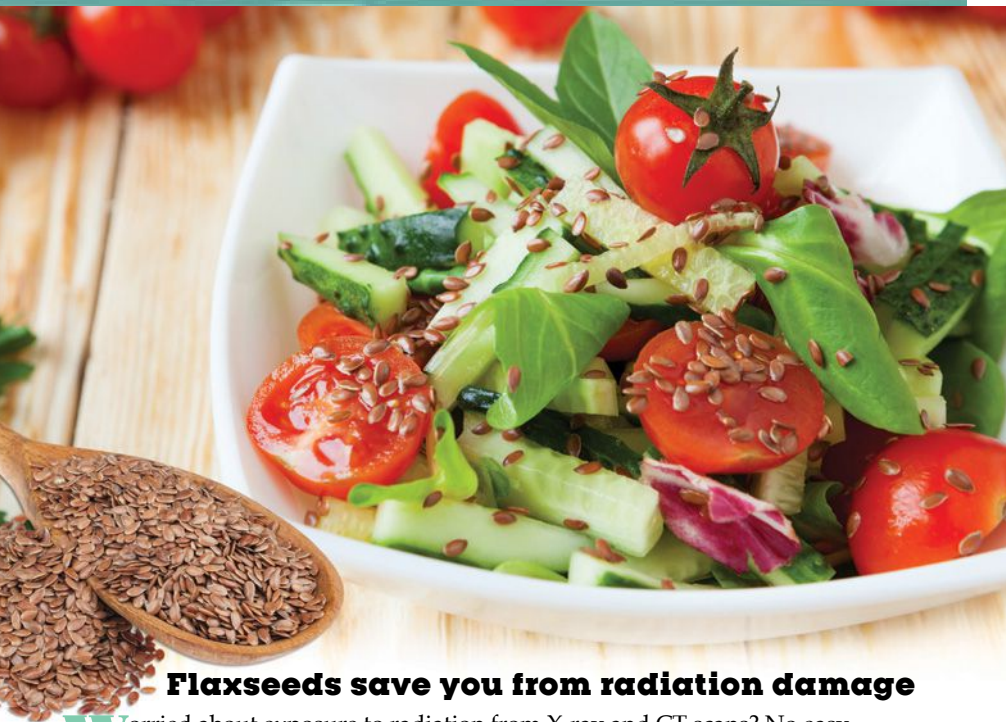
THE BOTTOM LINE:

Choosing water-free products (or not) is a matter of personal preference, not younger-looking skin.



Nutrition

Healthy Picks • Vitamin Power



Flaxseeds save you from radiation damage

Worried about exposure to radiation from X-ray and CT scans? No easy solutions here, though there's a surprising benefit from eating flaxseeds, says a study from the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. The study found that flaxseeds loaded with Omega-3 fatty acids, already known for their strong anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, work as both a mitigator and protector against radiation damage. Flaxseeds may also protect other healthy tissue and organs before exposure to radiation, and reduce damage even after exposure. "Have 1 teaspoonful of these seeds daily — roasted or powdered. Sprinkle on salads, add them to your cereals or mix flaxseed oil in your curd," suggests Bengaluru-based nutritionist Sheela Krishnaswamy.

SHUTTERSTOCK/INDIAPICTURE

Is a **Vitamin Deficiency** Making You Gain Weight?

They aren't just for preventing colds—vitamins may also fight fat. A study in the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition* found that obese people consumed up to 12% fewer vitamins and minerals, compared to adults of a healthy weight. Vitamins like A and D are essential for weight control, since they help regulate hunger hormones and fat cells. About 40% of adults are low in some nutrients; here's how to get your daily need in one swoop.

VITAMIN A



1/2 c cooked spinach

or



1 med sweet potato

VITAMIN D



1 large egg

+



85 g salmon

VITAMIN E



1/2 c raw almonds

or



1/2 c roasted sunflower seeds

MAGNESIUM



1/2 c roasted pumpkin seeds

+



56 g dark chocolate

65%

That's how much less insecticide traces your urine could contain if you eat organic produce often. More incentive to reach for cleaner apples, grapes, peaches, spinach and cherries, which top the Environmental Working Group's Dirty Dozen list of pesticide-heavy produce.

Source: *Environmental Health Perspectives*



How safe are your instant NOODLES?

The long and short of the most controversial junk food of recent times.

BY PALLAVI SHANKAR

You like it when you are strapped for time; plus it's cheap, filling and delicious. Now, the nation's favourite convenience food—instant noodles—seems to have landed in a soup. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and agencies like the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) have given it the thumbs down. Here's why you don't need that 2-minute fix.

It's junk

It is loaded with empty calories from refined flour that has a high glycaemic index (GI) and quickly releases sugar into the bloodstream, evoking a sharp insulin response. Excess salt is bad news, too. "The quantity of sodium may lead to an increased risk of hypertension," says nutritionist Dharini Krishnan, Chennai.



MSG is addictive

MSG is known to evoke Umami, the savoury fifth flavour. A study in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that having excess MSG may lead to weight gain. Naturally occurring MSG in foods like tomatoes and cheese doesn't harm the body. But, "chemically-synthesized MSG lights up the pleasure centres of the brain, is addictive and shouldn't be added to kids' products," explains Delhi-based nutritionist, Neelanjana Singh. A study published in the *Journal of Nutrition* found that women who consumed more instant noodles had a greater risk of metabolic syndrome—a cluster of conditions like obesity, high blood pressure and high blood sugar.



It could be contaminated

Recently, tests on samples of instant noodles found traces of lead, a heavy metal, in quantities above permissible limits. Lead can get into the soil/water through lead-based paints and industrial effluents, or the products could have been exposed during the processing, say experts. How lead got into instant noodles needs to be investigated.



Be label wise

Besides instant noodles, ready-to-make soups, candy, chewing gum, etc. are potential sources of hidden MSG. It is disguised as 'hydrolyzed vegetable/soya protein' and 'autolyzed yeast' in the list of ingredients. So read labels carefully.



Fitness

Better Workout • One-Minute Butt Toners

A Flatter Belly, In Just 15 Minutes

Forget ab crunches! New research has found that hula hooping can do wonders for your waist. In a small 6-week study, published in *The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, women who hooped with a 1.7 kg weighted ring for 15 minutes a day — five times a week — lost an average of 3.4 cm from their waist and 1.2 cm from their hips. Even better? Their middle muscles toned up too. The reason it works so well? “Each time you swing, it’s toning your entire core,” says US-based fitness expert Chris Freytag. “It also gets your heart rate up, which makes it a fun way to burn through belly fat.” So, embrace your inner child for less stress and a slimmer body, minus the gym visits.



3 Moves to Improve Your Posture

Practise these yoga asanas to strengthen and straighten your spine.



Tadasana

Stand tall against a wall with your arms by your sides. Make sure that the back of your heels, calves, butt, head and upper back are touching the wall. Though it sounds simple, it is a very active pose as it engages the thigh muscles and the core. Try and stand in this pose for 5-10 deep breaths. Aim to increase it to 20 breaths as you progress.



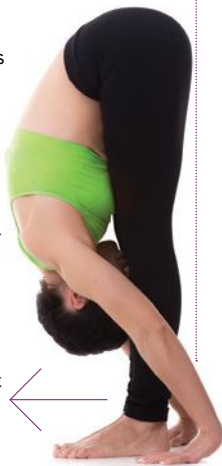
Trikonasana

Stand against the wall with your legs two feet apart and right foot turned out. Stretch out your arms, palms facing the front. Your upper back and butt should be touching the wall. Look over your right shoulder, inhale and extend towards your right, bending down from the hip to touch your right foot. Your arms should be perpendicular to the ground. Now look up towards your left hand and hold the pose for 5-10 breaths. This pose stretches and opens the hips, hamstrings, calves, shoulders, chest, spine and improves digestion.

Source: *Eefa Shroff*, Puma fitness consultant

Uttanasana

Move slightly forward from the wall as you bend forward—tuck your face in towards your knees and try to touch the floor with your palms. Once bent over, move backward towards the wall so the back of your heels, calves and butt are in contact with the wall. This pose stretches the hamstrings. Try and hold the pose for 5-10 breaths while trying to straighten your legs as much as possible. (This pose shouldn't be attempted without an instructor if you have back issues or have suffered a slipped disc).



The #1 Mistake Women Make in **Spin Class**

Getting even more out of your spinning workout may be simple: keep your butt off the seat for longer. Oxygen consumption jumps significantly in both climbing and running positions, which means you'll get fitter faster, according to new research. Why the boost? "When you're out of the saddle, you have to support your body weight, so your lungs and heart are forced to work harder," says study co-author (and cycling instructor) Nicole Rendos.

Source: Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research



Sore Muscles? Here's a Fishy Fix

If workouts tend to leave you achy, consider refuelling with fish. In a recent study, participants taking a daily supplement containing 102 mg of Omega-3 fatty acids—about the amount in a 500 g serving of salmon—reported less muscle soreness and tenderness than those popping a placebo. "The Omega-3 fatty acids in fish oil have anti-inflammatory properties," says US-based sports doctor Jordan Metz. "Just as those properties keep your heart healthy, they can keep your muscles in good shape, too."

Source: Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition



The Ultimate No-Squat, No-Lunge Butt Workout

Who says exercise has to hurt to work? Feel confident and strong with this knee-friendly lower-body transformer from US-based fitness expert, Chris Freytag.



Elevated Glute Bridge

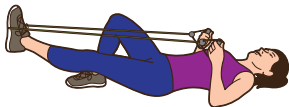
Targets: Glutes, hamstrings

Lie on your back with your knees bent and heels on top of a chair seat. Engaging the core and glutes, lift your hips off the floor. Squeeze glutes tight, then lower hips back to the floor. Repeat for 60 seconds.

Low-Impact Leg Press

Targets: Glutes, legs

Lie on your back with your knees bent, feet on the floor. Place the middle of a resistance band under your left foot, holding 1 handle in each hand. Bring left knee to your chest. Engage glutes and hamstrings, then slowly press foot out, away from your body, until your leg is almost straight. Bring your knee back to your chest. Repeat for 30 seconds. Repeat on the opposite side for another 30 seconds.



Tick-Tock

Targets: Glutes, thighs

Stand on the middle of a resistance band, holding 1 handle in each hand. Engage glutes and lift left leg out to the side. Lower leg back to start and repeat on the opposite side. Continue alternating legs for 60 seconds.



Booty Lifter

Targets: Glutes, thighs

Balance on right foot with hands on the back of a chair, left knee bent at 90° angle. Lift left leg out to side, squeezing glutes, then return leg to start. Repeat for 30 seconds. Repeat on opposite side for another 30 seconds.



Q&A

Is it really better to run slower?

PROBABLY NOT.

It all started with a recent study in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* that said that runners who go hard have a higher risk of an early death. But before you stop striving to hit that 6-minute-km, consider that “pushing harder” was defined as maintaining a 11 kmph pace for 4 or more hours a week. “Most of us just don’t run that fast,” says sports doc Jordan Metzl, the author of the new book *Running Strong* (Rodale). In other words, we’d be well advised to ignore the findings. Instead of slowing down, consider alternating speeds. “There’s convincing data that high-intensity interval training is more beneficial than maintaining a slow, consistent pace,” Metzl says.

60%

That’s how much your fitness tracker could be overestimating your calorie burn (yikes!).

But don’t toss the gadget yet: trackers are pretty accurate with step count (they’re off by only about 10%), and wearing one can encourage you to move more, says Cedric Bryant, chief science officer of the American Council on Exercise.

Family

Depression • General Health • Home

5 Surprising Conditions Linked To Depression

Feeling down is a natural reaction to health struggles. But depression may also be an early warning sign of impending health conditions — everything from thyroid disorder to heart disease, cancer to dementia and Parkinson's.

A new study published in the journal *Neurology* finds people with depression may be at greater risk for Parkinson's disease. Compared to people without clinical depression, those diagnosed with the mental illness are more than twice as likely to eventually develop Parkinson's, the study shows.

The researchers aren't sure of the reason, but it's possible that major depression causes damage to the brain that contributes to Parkinson's. It's also possible that the drugs used to treat depression contribute to the development of Parkinson's — or that depression is just a very early symptom of the illness. >>>





>>> Thyroid Conditions: A recent study in the *Journal of Thyroid Research* found people diagnosed with depression are more likely to have thyroid problems and vice versa. If your low mood is accompanied by fatigue, weight gain or other physical symptoms, thyroid issues may be partly to blame.

Heart Disease: Several studies have tied depression to a greater risk for heart disease and heart attack. A possible reason could be stress which promotes inflammation and the build-up of arterial plaque.

Cancer: Doctors have observed a link between depression and certain forms of cancer — particularly pancreatic cancer.

Dementia: Another *Neurology* study found an association between depression and dementia. In fact, the authors of that study say depression may be among the earliest warning signs of the brain disease.

What you can do: Talk about your feelings with people you trust. Engage in activities that keep you happy and calm. Don't take on too much upon yourself — stress can worsen depression. Exercise regularly. Keep a journal, noting the time, place and situations in which you feel low. See a doctor or counsellor if you find yourself persistently sad, anxious or pessimistic continuously for more than 2 weeks or have suicidal thoughts.

—Markham Heid

ASK THE GP

DR PRASAD

RAO, director, Division of Internal Medicine, Medanta-The Medicity



Q I seem to get an upset stomach quite frequently. Please advice.

A. If your stomach gets upset frequently, get your stool examined to know if you have an underlying infection. As a general rule, avoid eating street food and drinking water that may be unsafe. If you're vulnerable to stomach woes, make sure you drink plenty of fluids (to avoid dehydration) and wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating them. If your tummy issues are a recent phenomenon, check your diet. In summer, we tend to overindulge in mangoes, which can have a laxative effect and trigger loose stools. It is a good idea to stick to cooling foods like cucumber and melon. Having a bowl of curd after your meal, and lassi or buttermilk during the day may help too.



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You

Never Procrastinate • Accomplish Goals

How Curiosity Improves Your Memory

Step one to a super sharp memory? Fire up your mind with a subject that flicks your fascination switch. Turns out feeling curious about something—anything—enhances your ability to retain information later, according to a new study from the University of California, Davis, in the US. But how? Glad you asked. “Curiosity increases activity in brain circuits that use dopamine, which helps solidify new cell connections that happen during learning,” explains study co-author, professor of psychology Charan Ranganath. Better still, what you concentrate your curiosity on doesn’t even have to be related to the details you’re trying to remember. So before you start cramming the notes for your next big work presentation—or in fact anytime you’re keen to jolt those neurons into instant information retention mode—read a chapter of a riveting book or listen to a podcast first. The only thing curiosity will kill is your forgetfulness!

When faced with a boring memory task, engage with other riveting information and then tackle the chore.

Work on Your Goals Now

Whip out your calculator when you set your goals: counting the number of days until your deadline may help you make progress sooner, suggests a new research from the University of Southern California in the US.

Researchers asked people when they thought they should start saving money for life events like retirement. The study participants were told that the event was either years away—say, 18—or days away—6,570. The people who knew the number of days, planned to start saving 4 times sooner than those who thought of their goals as years away. That's because counting down the days—even if it's thousands of them—makes the future feel closer and in need of current attention, explains lead researcher Daphna Oyserman, PhD.

While the study focussed on saving money, the strategy can be applied to any goal, Oyserman says. For example, if you want to tone up for a vacation next year, knowing that you'll be in a swimsuit in 349 days makes you want to hit the gym ASAP. So, next time you make plans for your future, tally up the days. It may be enough to spur you into action sooner.



P. MURALI DORAISWAMY
*Director, Neurocognitive Disorders Program,
Duke University School of Medicine*

FROM THE BRAIN DOC

Exercise does amazing things for your brain and protects you from various diseases. Researchers at the Duke University studied 200 people between the ages of 25 and 50 and found that exercise releases 25 different body chemicals, increases the blood supply to the brain and encourages the production of nerve growth hormones. The latter enables the nerve cells in the brain to make more connections, making your brain sharper and work faster.

8.5

That's how much the risk of a heart attack rises in the 2 hours following a burst of intense anger, finds a University of Sydney study. Another reason to give peace a chance.

**Can
my lifestyle affect
the quality of my eggs?
Anything I can
do to secure it?**

Manisha, 30,
RANCHI



Yes, it can. A woman is born with a fixed number of eggs. Over the years, the count falls through the process of apoptosis and atresia, eventually depleting fully at menopause.

There is increasing evidence that our lifestyle affects both the quality and quantity of eggs in the ovaries, and therefore our reproductive potential. One good example of this is our body weight being out of whack. Both obesity and being underweight can lower fertility by causing hormonal imbalance and ovulatory dysfunction. A large, population-based study by MA Hassan and SR Killick in the UK found that women with

BMI >25 and <19 took longer to conceive. So eat healthy and exercise regularly to stay within your ideal weight spectrum.

Smoking is another huge factor. Both active and passive smoking can affect the quality of eggs and the hormone levels in women. Cigarette smoke also seems to deplete the ovarian reserve faster. Women who are exposed to it may reach menopause 1 to 4 years earlier than the others. Avoid smoking and make sure you don't end up passive smoking.

Generally, fertility starts declining at 35, making it harder to conceive or carry on with a stable pregnancy. The incidence of genetic abnor-

malities and spontaneous abortions also increase with maternal age and due to poor egg quality. Make sure you plan your baby accordingly.

Other factors include mental stress, too much alcohol or caffeine and a sedentary lifestyle. Moreover, exposure to environmental pollution and chemicals, chronic infections like hepatitis or HIV, pelvic infections and STDs also affect fertility. Also remember that these factors prevent successful outcomes in patients undergoing fertility treatment. 📌

PROF (DR) ABHA MAJUMDAR *Director and Head, Centre of IVF and Human Reproduction, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi*

📧 Send your questions to askprevention@intoday.com

How do I make a connection with my spouse after an affair? We are trying to move on and make it work.

HM, 34
DELHI



An affair can be a disruption, but it can also be a gift. The gift of revealing what you hold important in yourself and in each other. Obviously both of you have talked about the affair, and honesty rebuilds trust that may have gotten damaged. Now that you have decided to put the past where it belongs and focus on what you have and want to strengthen together, concentrate on that. Not on who did what to whom and why and where and all those questions that only torture and lead to no constructive outcome for anyone. Most of the time they just create unnecessary drama!

After a breach of trust, some people feel that they have to bare their soul and reveal all in order to rebuild trust. In the interest of a newly discovered 'honesty', they spew out needless details to salve their conscience but these serve no useful purpose and may only hurt the other person. On the other hand, some people feel they must know every single detail to feel in control and 'understand'. Again, painful and pointless. There is no way that one will fully understand and there is no way to control another person.

This is your life, not a film. Whether you were the one who had the

affair or your spouse did, it makes no sense to follow some imagined script of being a repentant wrong-doer or a forgiving martyr, or any other imagined role. Allow yourself to be you, to be honest about your feelings, be vulnerable, be open to feeling guilty (for whatever you did or did not do) and letting it go, and most of all, be open to loving and being loved. With time you may bless the as yet undiscovered gifts this affair has given you both. 

RADHIKA CHANDIRAMANI is founder of TARSHI, an organisation that works on issues of sexuality. She is a trained clinical psychologist.



Send your questions to askprevention@intoday.com;

Visit the FAQs page at www.tarshi.net or call 011-26472229, Mon to Fri 9.30 am to 5.30 pm

Use the Potassium Power

This mineral prevents, reduces and treats high blood pressure.

It is well known that excessive salt (sodium) intake can cause or worsen high blood pressure. Unfortunately, little attention is paid to the extremely important role that potassium plays in decreasing the risk of hypertension (and its consequences such as stroke) and reducing the need for drug therapy.

A 2014 review of studies on large populations explored the connection of potassium intake and subsequent strokes. It was found that an average increased potassium intake of 1.5 g per day was associated with a 20% reduction in the incidence of stroke. According to the World Heart Federation, over 5.5 million patients worldwide die from strokes annually. A minor increase in potassium intake can prevent over 1 million deaths!

Over 81% of people with a high potassium intake are able to control their BP with less than one-half of the drugs, irrespective of their intake of sodium, calories or alcohol.

A study in 2001 examined the combined effects of high-potassium and low-sodium intake in lowering BP and found reduction in hypertension greater than either intervention (one being salt reduction, and two being increased potassium intake alone). The reduction in BP was found to be “equal to or greater than those of a single drug therapy.” The reduction in BP was, in fact, 11.5 units in hypertensive patients.

The recommended daily intake of potassium is 4.7 g. However, most of us consume about 50% of this from dietary sources. Start consuming potassium-rich foods. These include potatoes with the skin (738 mg in one small potato), plain yoghurt (550 mg in about 220 g), fresh orange juice (500 mg in 100 ml), banana (425 mg in 1 medium-sized banana) and spinach (400 mg in 1 cup cooked spinach).

Keep in mind that many drugs, especially diuretics such as frusemide (sold as Lasix, Frusenex) used in hypertension, drain the potassium from the body rapidly. In such cases, seek a prescription for potassium from your physician. 📌



DR CHANDRA M GULHATI is Editor, *Monthly Index of Medical Specialities*.



Send your questions to askprevention@intoday.com

From the Heart Doc • **Dr Peeyush Jain**

Lower Your BP Now!

Blame it on your genes or the pressures of modern life, hypertension is striking earlier now. Here's all you need to know about this silent killer.

High blood pressure is defined as the consistent rise in BP to >140/90 mmHg. Until recently, hypertension was a problem of the middle-aged (45-65) and the elderly (>65). But it now seems to be affecting young adults (18-45 years). Recent community-based surveys have revealed that up to one-third of young and middle-aged adults may have hypertension, more than 50% of whom are not aware of it. Amongst those who are aware, more than 50% are not at their desirable BP due to lack of or inadequate treatment. We need more data on figures of BP among the young, and it's realistic to say that the prevalence in young adults seems to be around 10%.

Hypertension increases the risk of heart attack, stroke and kidney failure. Because it makes the heart pump harder, it may lead to left ventricular hypertrophy (LVH). It can also affect patients mentally and interfere with their work and performance. All of these are major concerns given that these are the most productive years of one's life. Here's the low-down to help you save your heart.

It may not show symptoms. Hypertension is usually silent, so get your BP checked every 6 months to catch it early. You need at least 3 elevated readings to confirm the diagnosis. Once diagnosed, you will need to test your blood glucose, cholesterol, kidney functions and get examined for signs of organ damage, such as retina complications. An echocardiography may be performed too.

There may be a pattern. A majority of young and middle-aged adults with hypertension have both systolic (top number) and diastolic (bottom number) rise in BP. The systolic rise in young adults is often not serious, especially if there is no rise in the diastolic figure. However, a diastolic increase in BP is always a serious issue, as it



DR PEEYUSH JAIN
head, Department of
Preventive Cardiology,
Fortis-Escorts Heart
Institute, New Delhi



Send your questions to askprevention@intoday.com

indicates the pressure on the heart when it is resting. Young adults may have isolated systolic hypertension, which may be a sign of youth and active circulation.

Your genes or lifestyle are to blame.

You are more likely to have a high BP if both or either of your parents are hypertensive. Physical inactivity and weight gain, particularly around the waist, are other important factors.

Women face a unique risk. Hypertension that develops during pregnancy is common and a matter of concern.

In fact, pregnancy-related hypertension is a major cause of maternal and foetal morbidity and mortality. It is difficult to treat. But if the pregnancy is successful, BP rapidly returns to normal after delivery. However, future risk of hypertension remains high.

Improving lifestyle helps

manage high BP. Borderline cases of hypertension may not need medication and can be controlled with lifestyle changes and re-evaluation every 6 months. Those with a high BP and at a risk for organ damage (LVH or kidney dysfunction) will need drug therapy. Even when you are on medication, if you follow a healthy lifestyle, are able to keep your BP under control and don't have any other complication, you may be weaned off medication gradually.

Hypertension increases the risk of heart attack, stroke, kidney failure and left ventricular hypertrophy. It can also affect patients mentally and interfere with their work and performance.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

You can't change your genes, but you can adopt heart-friendly habits.

- **Work out your heart:** Regular aerobic exercise (running, walking or cycling) over 3-6 months results in a reduction of 6-12 mmHg (systolic BP) and 3-5 mmHg (diastolic BP). However, cessation of exercise is promptly followed by a rise in BP to pre-exercise levels. Exercise at least 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week.
- **Lose some weight:** Modest weight loss lowers the BP and the risk of blood vessel complications too. With a 10% reduction in body weight, an 8-12 mmHg reduction in BP is expected.
- **Eat right:** Dietary modifications like salt restriction and sufficient intake of potassium, magnesium, calcium and folic acid can help. Restrict your intake of saturated fat. And follow the general principles of healthy eating.



THERE ARE A NUMBER OF CHALLENGES

that make taking care of seniors at home difficult for caregivers. Health concerns for the elderly include non compliance of drugs, memory loss, dementia and injuries from falls, among others. Below, some tips to make elderly care at home manageable.

Consolidate all medical information.

Keep a folder that contains all details about the patient's ailments, doctor's contact details, medical test results and prescriptions and medical notes, if any. If a hard copy is too cumbersome to keep track of, then keep a soft copy on a pen drive.

Take in a nursing attendant. It's a good idea to call in the services of a professionally-trained medical caregiver who will ensure that your loved one strictly follows through with the prescription. In case symptoms get worse, a nurse will be able to alert the doctor. Portea, a leading in-home healthcare provider in India offers trained attendant service at home.

TAKING CARE OF THE ELDERLY

Prevent falls.

Hazard-proof your home environment and review your parents' medication. In most cases, some antidepressants and sedatives may increase falling risks. Help your parent wear sensible shoes and ensure that the floor remains dry. Non-slip mats and rugs also play a big role in fall-prevention.

Help them stay active. Exercising can go a long way in helping your ageing parent remain healthy and fit. With his/her doctor's approval, let the caregiver watch as he/she engages in activities such as water workouts or walking. Such physical activities will boost their mood, organ functionality and strength. Looking after your ageing parent properly means providing the most compassionate elder care solutions. You can make home care an affordable and comfortable reality by hiring a compassionate nursing attendant, undertaking fall-prevention measures, arranging for physical activities and elder-proofing your home.

PERSISTENT ACES AND
PAINS ARE NOT THE PROBLEM.
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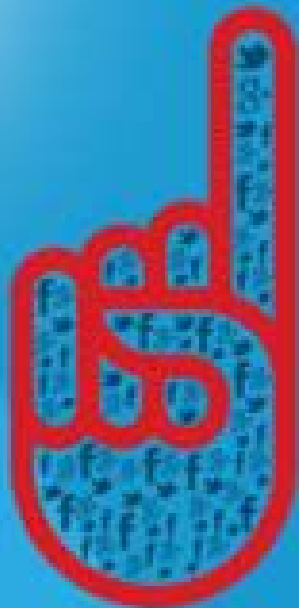
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Banish Patches

Pigmentation is a pesky problem. Here's how you can wipe it away.



DR REKHA SHETH
is a leading cosmetic dermatologist in Mumbai. She is founder-president, Cosmetology Society of India and runs Yuva, a successful chain of skin clinics.



Send your questions to askprevention@intoday.com

Pigmentation is extremely common amongst us Indians. We have hyperactive melanocytes — skin cells responsible for the production of the skin-darkening pigment melanin — which go into overdrive at the slightest provocation, whether internal or external. As we age, our skin cells also tend to age and don't function nearly as well as they used to. The functioning of melanocytes slows down, which may express itself in some women as small, white spots. Otherwise, they over work, leading to dark pigmentation, which is more common.

These are the most common causes of pigmentation, especially after menopause:

- **Dry Skin:** Our sebaceous glands produce less and less oil as we age, and as a result our skin becomes dry. Dry skin tends to be mildly inflamed. Though this is asymptomatic, it can stimulate the melanocytes and lead to patchy pigmentation.
- **Sun Sensitivity:** Our skin's sensitivity to sun also increases as we age. Since sun exposure boosts melanin production, it can lead to excessive tanning, bordering on pigmentation.

Many women also suffer from polymorphic light eruption — a condition characterised by dry, itchy and scaly rashes upon sun exposure, which can ultimately lead to pigmentation.

- **Facial Cosmetic Melanosis:** Women who suffer from this condition tend to get patchy grey-brown pigmentation on the face and neck as an allergic reaction to cosmetics like moisturisers and perfumes. Before you start suspecting your daily cream for causing pigmentation, keep this in mind: facial cosmetic melanosis develops over a period of months with repeated use of certain products, and is not very common.

■ **Melasma:** This skin condition causes brown to grey-brown patches on the nose, cheeks, temples, forehead and jaw. Although melasma is mostly caused by a hormonal imbalance, scientists and researchers haven't been able to pinpoint the ones that are liable. It has also been known to be associated with hypothyroidism as well as oral contraceptive pills.

DAILY CARE

If pigmentation hasn't caught up with you yet, here are a few things that can keep it at bay. Incorporate these steps into your daily skincare regimen, and you will also ensure that it doesn't spread further:

- Cleanse your face only with a mild face wash; harsh soaps can dry up your skin and trigger or boost pigmentation.
- Use a sunscreen with SPF 30 or more and PA+++ every single day, even if you are indoors (the causative UVA rays can sneak in through the windows as well).
- Use an appropriate moisturiser at bed-time daily, depending on your skin type.
- Use an over-the-counter skin lightening cream with any one of the following ingredients, at least 3 times a week: niacinamide, arbutin, turmeric, licorice, mulberry extract or Vitamin C.
- Invest in a cream with kojic acid, alpha-hydroxy acids (glycolic, phytic,

Dry skin can also lead to pigmentation. Avoid harsh soaps and don't forget to moisturise your skin every day.



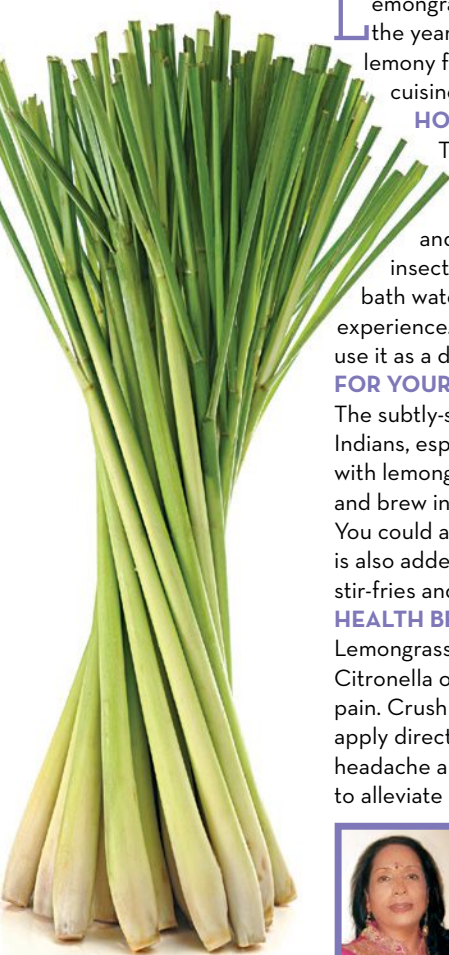
lactic, etc.) and retinoids (retinol). Apply it every night at least 15 minutes before you head to bed, if you already have pigmentation.

If none of the above measures help, consult a dermatologist immediately. It is somewhat difficult treating pigmentation: it normally takes at least one to two years after thorough treatment. There are many procedures a dermatologist can perform to expedite the treatment, including microdermabrasion, skin peels, Intense Pulse Light and special lasers like Q-switched Nd:YAG, etc. **12**

Natural Healer

Lemongrass

Include this aromatic herb in your meals and beverages.



Lemongrass is a popular herb that grows throughout the year. This plant looks like a bush of grass and has a lemony fragrance and so the name. It is used in various cuisines and also for making medicines and cosmetics.

HOME HERB

The essential oil extracted from lemongrass — citronella — has therapeutic benefits. According to aromatherapy, it helps relieve stress, and is used to make soaps, perfumes as well as insect repellents. Add a few drops of the oil to your bath water or blend it in your scrub, for a refreshing experience. Because of its antiseptic properties, you can use it as a disinfectant for your home.

FOR YOUR KITCHEN

The subtly-scented herb is a key ingredient in Thai cuisine. Indians, especially in the south, prepare tea and *kashayam* with lemongrass. Try this: pluck fresh leaves (or use dried) and brew in hot water for a few minutes. Strain and drink. You could add some honey for sweetness. Lemongrass is also added whole, sliced or as a paste, to stew, curries, stir-fries and beverages.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Lemongrass helps clear nasal congestion and sinuses. Citronella oil relieves headaches and muscle and joint pain. Crush the plant's fresh leaves with your hands and apply directly on your forehead to reduce the intensity of a headache and even a fever. You could also use this method to alleviate stomach ache and muscle pain. 



GITA RAMESH is joint MD, Kairali Ayurvedic Group and author of *The Ayurvedic Cookbook, Get Fit in Just Two Weeks*



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WITH YOU THE WHOLE 9 MONTHS AND BEYOND

Pregnancy and childbirth are some of the most cherished moments in a woman's life as they give her the joys of being a life-giver.

Columbia Venus, a comprehensive maternity care program from Columbia Asia offers expecting parents the opportunity to relish the joys of pregnancy and childbirth, as we make sure all your needs are taken care of in this beautiful phase of life.

Columbia Asia Hospitals take it as a privilege to be with you on your 9-month journey, right from the beginning till you deliver, and even beyond. We not only provide clinical advice and treatment, but also educate you on what you could expect through the entire phase. We have all modern facilities and a team of highly qualified and experienced medical professionals to offer you a safe and joyful birthing experience.

From pre-conception counseling, antenatal consultation to delivery and post-natal services, we ensure that you and your baby receive comprehensive care. Our specialized birthing facility provides a comfortable environment with the added benefit of easy access to necessary medical equipment for emergency situations.

COLUMBIA VENUS ADVANTAGES:

- Comprehensive program which includes pre-conception counseling, antenatal care, parent craft workshops, exercises to post natal care
- Expecting mothers can choose their birthing plan, as long as it is safe for them and medically appropriate
- Obstetricians and anesthetists on duty at all times. This is important in case you go into labour on a Sunday or in the middle of the night
- Neonatologists and Level 3 Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) on premises. This helps if the baby is born pre-mature, or unwell as he/she might need special medical care
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I am a light sleeper. Can you suggest ways to get sound sleep and wake up feeling refreshed?

Renu T, 41
HYDERABAD



I am glad you asked. Not getting the required amount (7 to 8 hours daily) and quality of sleep you need, can take a toll on your energy, mood, health and the ability to function effectively through the day. (See *Your Body Starved of Sleep*).

Insomnia can be temporary or chronic. If you're experiencing chronic insomnia, consult a doctor to figure out the root cause. Otherwise, try the following tricks to sleep better every night.

- Avoid caffeinated beverages after 4 pm. Also try to limit your alcohol intake.
- Avoid naps during the day. If you must,

limit it to 30 minutes before 3 pm.

- Exercise daily, it helps you sleep better.
- Don't go to bed on a full stomach. Eat your dinner at least 2 hours before bedtime; you could sip on herbal tea or warm milk later.
- Wind down to prepare your body for sleep: dim the lights, turn off the TV and computer. Don't read on screen, watch or engage in anything that stimulates the mind, such as video games or office work. Instead, opt for calming activities like meditation and pranayama (Bhramari and Anulom Vilom are especially helpful). Soak your feet in hot water about 20 minutes

before bedtime.

- Make sure your bedroom is quiet, calm and dark. Noise and light can interfere with sleep.
- Stick to a regular sleep schedule. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day to support your biological clock. Remember, you get the best sleep between 10 pm and 6 am.
- Ayurvedic herbs such as sankhapushpi, bhringaraj and brahmi, and homeopathic remedies like Nux Vom, Coffea Cruda and Passiflora can help tackle insomnia. Consult an expert before you take them. 

DR ISSAC MATHAI, MD,
SOUKYA & Prevention's
alternative medicine expert.

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Less Is More

When it comes to salt, eating a smaller amount brings bigger benefits.

Salt is crucial not just to improve the taste of food, but also to maintain good health. We need it to transport nutrients, transmit nerve impulses and contract muscles—including our heart. Sodium is also necessary for maintaining fluid, electrolyte and pH balance. Without sodium in our bodies, we would cease to exist.

Nevertheless, while a certain amount of salt/sodium is essential in our food, an excess can be a problem. Besides increasing the risk of high blood pressure and insulin resistance, a salt-rich diet may trigger other harmful health effects, including increased risk of strokes, heart failure, osteoporosis, stomach cancer, kidney disease and liver cirrhosis. It may cause water retention, which translates into extra kilos on the scale. On the other hand, low sodium can be a problem too, and may cause depression, hallucinations, headaches, fatigue, irritability, muscle weakness, cramps, nausea, restlessness, vomiting and in severe cases, even death.

SALT OF LIFE—HOW MUCH?

Most people consume much more salt/sodium than they need. While the recommendations are 1 teaspoon salt (6 g salt = 2,400 mg sodium) a day, most people consume 3,500 to 4,300 mg sodium a day. According to the World Health Organization, patients of high blood pressure should limit their intake to $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt (1,600 mg sodium) per day to keep their BP under control. However, if you have low blood pressure or spend a long time out in the heat in hot weather or are into active sports, you may have a higher sodium requirement because you lose it through sweat.



ISHI KHOSLA is a clinical nutritionist and director, *Whole Foods, Delhi.*



Send your questions to askprevention@intoday.com

REDUCE YOUR SODIUM INTAKE

Here are 11 tips to help you cut down on salt.

1. Read the 'Nutrition Facts' label on packaged foods and pick the ones low in salt. Look carefully; you'll notice that foods in the same category have different amounts of salt.

2. Watch out for foods with monosodium glutamate (better known as MSG), baking soda, baking powder, disodium phosphate, sodium alginate, sodium nitrate or any other compound that has sodium or "Na" in its name as they are likely to be loaded with salt.

3. Reduce salt in cooking and in your recipes to half the amount; or omit salt completely and substitute with a seasoning. You could use fresh herbs and spices instead of seasoned salts. For example, buy garlic powder instead of garlic salt and onion powder instead of onion salt.

4. Use a salt shaker with small holes at the dining table. Avoid sprinkling salt on fruits and salads. Remember, common salt, rock salt and pink salt—all contain similar amounts of sodium.

5. Add fresh lemon juice instead of salt to dal, fish and vegetables.

6. Restrict use of pickles, *papad*, *churan* and similar condiments to a minimum, or make them at home, sans the excess salt.

Those with high blood pressure should limit their salt intake to $\frac{2}{3}$ tsp per day to keep their BP under control.



7. Choose fresh or frozen unprocessed food over those that are canned, cured, smoked or processed. Limit intake of fast foods. They contain excess salt/sodium that acts as a preservative as well as imparts flavour to the food.

8. Eat fewer processed meats like sausages, ham and bacon. These are particularly rich in sodium.

9. Make your own sauces using your favourite salt substitute or herb/spice blend. Use only low-salt soya sauce and dilute with lemon juice. There are a few commercial sauces that are okay—hot pepper sauce, hot sauce, Angostura and Tabasco.

10. Choose bakery products using yeast over those prepared with baking soda/baking salt.

11. Pick foods low in salt when eating out. Also, ask the chef to cook your food with minimum salt. 

My muscles are stiff and achy after working out. Please suggest easy, at-home moves to ease stiffness.

Mekhla, 33
CHANDIGARH



For a pain-free workout, it is important to warm up with stretching before, and cool down, after exercise. Your limbs need to go through their range of movement—this ensures that the joints are lubricated and your muscles lose their stiffness. Stretching also improves blood circulation and raises your body temperature. This preps you for your workout. Post workout, you need to stretch the muscles you worked on and hold the stretch in a static position for at least 10 to 30 seconds. Here are some stretches you can do every day after you exercise, to ease stiffness in major muscle groups.

Chest opener Stand facing a doorway and stretch arms out to sides, elbows bent, forearms and palms pressing into the wall. Walk forward to feel a long stretch in your chest and arms.

Hips Stand about 2 feet in front of a step-up board and place your right foot on it, hands on your hips. Shift your weight forward to feel a stretch in front of the left hip. Switch sides.

Outer thighs Lying on your back, bend both knees with the feet flat on the ground, arms on your side. Lift the right knee so your leg is parallel to the ground. Place the outer left ankle on your right thigh. Hold for 60-90 seconds and then repeat on the other side.

Hamstrings stretch Lying on your back, bend your right knee into your chest and sling a theraband or a rolled-up towel around the ball of your foot.

Straighten your right leg towards the ceiling, keeping the left leg on the floor. Press out through both heels. Hold for 30-50 seconds and then repeat on the left leg.

Lower back Lying on your back, bend your knees into your chest and bring your arms out to form a 'T'. As you exhale, lower your knees to the ground on your right side. Hold for 1-2 minutes then repeat on the other side. ■

NISHA VARMA is a Reebok Master Trainer based in Pune.

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Nature's Therapy

Being outdoors amidst nature does more than bring momentary peace. Beat stress and fight depression with this natural therapy.



DR PRABHA

CHANDRA is professor of psychiatry, NIMHANS, Bengaluru. She specialises in mental health problems related to pregnancy and postpartum.



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It was the Sakura season in Japan and everyone was waiting for the beautiful pink cherry blossoms. A friend and I were in Tokyo for a conference and found some time to step out for a walk in a wooded park amidst the bustle of this megapolis. Just walking quietly around the park for an hour, gazing at the hues of pink and orange, touching the leaves and inhaling the garden aroma was enough to calm our senses. No wonder, the Japanese love their gardens. There is a recent body of research that focusses on the role of healing gardens and nature on stress, depression and burnout. Being amidst nature, even for a short while every day, appears to reduce cortisol levels, lower heart rate variability and blood pressure, indicating that nature relaxes us and makes us happy.

We've evolved in nature and both the body and mind appear to function best when surrounded by a natural environment. Studies have shown that when stressed, 2 out of 3 people choose a natural setting to retreat into. Even in large cities, having trees in your neighbourhood appears to slash stress and anger levels, and at the same time, enhances the ability to make social connections.

TRY FOREST BATHING

The Japanese have discovered the interesting concept of *Shinrin Yoku* or Forest Bathing. This involves either walking in the forest or just being in a forest and observing your surroundings. A combination of these activities has been found to greatly decrease depression and anxiety.

An interesting garden in Denmark is called the Alnarp garden which offers 'psychological restoration' as treatment. People who are depressed and report burnout, use the garden to rest and to restore their peace and calm. This form of Psychological Restoration Therapy

is offered for a few weeks where the participants spend the whole day in the healing garden.

Studies have also shown that being in natural spaces increases clarity of mind and facilitates emotional perspective, particularly in women. It also lowers levels of anxiety and depression.

OUTDOOR THERAPY

How do you create a natural environment for yourself and heal yourself with nature's therapy? Here are some ideas:

- If you live in a city, find the closest natural forest or wooded park near your home. Try to walk in the park or simply sit and immerse yourself in the surroundings for at least 30 minutes, several times a week.
- If a family member or friend is stressed or depressed, try to encourage them to spend time in the local park or garden.
- Encourage the elderly in your family to walk in a park with easy pathways or take them on a wheelchair to spend some time in a green and wooded area; it will improve their mood and attention span.
- Exercise outdoors. It has been found to be more beneficial than indoor workouts. Try to alternate your exercise routine to fit in some time in the sunshine.

Both green and blue spaces are therapeutic for the mind. Find a lake or a water body in your city that you



Walk in a park or simply sit and immerse yourself in the surroundings for 30 minutes, several times a week.

can visit. Therapeutic gardens and natural environments should not have too many sculptures or complex pathways. Try and find a tree and sit under it for a few minutes.

On weekends, plan a short trip to a park or a wooded area, rather than going to a mall or watching a film in a multiplex.

If you work in an office with air conditioning and no windows, try and keep a memory of a natural surrounding that you can periodically touch or stroke—a green plant, a rock, a piece of tree bark or shells will work well.

Remember how as kids, the family picnic was such an exciting event? How we planned the snacks, games and the lists of people to invite. After the food and games were over, many of us would find a quiet spot to take a nap, chew on the grass or simply gaze into the green space. Without realising why, we would come back recharged, relaxed and often, more contemplative. Research is telling us now that these activities are indeed therapeutic. Embrace nature, you'll never regret it! 🌿

Let Kids Choose

Give your children the freedom to make their own choices and see them bloom.

Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and wisdom to know the difference.

There is tremendous depth and wisdom in this serenity prayer. There have been times though, when I've chosen to forget this, so I can complain, blame and wallow in self pity. But then I am reminded of its powers, and this has helped me brush aside the negativity and take a wiser approach.

We always have a choice and we are the product of our choices. The more we believe it, the more we have a sense of personal agency and ownership of our own life. Psychiatrist Victor Frankl's landmark book, *Man's Search for Meaning* chronicles his experiences in the Nazi concentration camp. He found that the only way to survive and find meaning in the darkest hour of existence was through continuing to choose human dignity over despair.

When it comes to day-to-day life, we are again making choices in what we eat, what work we choose to do, how we spend our time. The more we become aware of how, why and what we choose, the more we will learn about how we live our life. Not just that, it also helps to develop our power of critical thinking, reasoning, evaluation and taking responsibility.

Making choices is a life skill, and yet, we don't seem to be letting our children make choices. There are various reasons why we resist giving them that freedom: we are too anxious, it is convenient to impose our decisions on them, or sometimes, we do it because we need to control them. But remember, forcing your choices on them may backfire. William Glasser, who pioneered the Choice Theory, says "They do less under duress." Coercive methods might work in the short term due to an element of fear.



DR SHELJA SEN is a clinical psychologist, family therapist and trainer with Children First, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Institute, New Delhi.



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However, in the long run, they only make children more resentful and rebellious. Resist the urge to impose and help them bloom. Here are tips to help you in the process.

■ **Keep age in mind.** The choices a toddler gets are obviously very different from what a teenager needs to make. You could ask your toddler to choose between two options of meals/games/clothes, whereas you could leave the teenager to make bigger choices—what courses does he wish to enroll in, who will be a part of his inner circle of friends, and so on.

■ **Go one step at a time.** Even with the teenager, you would need to take it slow. If he is not used to making his own choices, it would be more effective to start with one area, and then build it up slowly. Obviously, you are not going to ask your 13-year-old if he wants to do homework or not. However, you can give him a choice of when he wants to do it.

■ **Hold your anxious horses.** My son has to decide on a college he would like to enroll in. Both my husband and I are in favour of one institute he has an offer from, but we are fighting the urge to influence him. This is his choice, not ours.

■ **Accept.** Of course, along with the control we relinquish, we have to

Imposing
your decisions on
your children makes
them resentful and
rebellious.
Let them make their
own decisions
instead.



learn to accept the consequences of the choices they make. They will make mistakes, even fail and hopefully, learn from it.

■ **Mind your language.** So much of our language is anti-choice. "This is the way I am", "I had no choice", "It's out of my control". Our children internalise this and start believing in it too. So become more mindful of the vocabulary you use and make it more positive: "I chose to do this", "I always have a choice", "The way I react to people is under my control."

■ **Recognise.** Highlight and acknowledge every time your child makes a good choice. It could be your toddler's decision to switch off the television herself or your 9-year-old sharing his toy with a friend or your teen who exercised self-control even in a provocative situation. 📌

Blocked Nose

PROBLEM SOLVED!

BY KATHAKOLI DASGUPTA

Whether it's the result of a common cold or sinus infection, the flu or allergies, a stuffy nose can get really annoying. Here, 9 ways to unclog your nose and breathe easy.

Start Here!

Inhale Steam

It's tried and tested.

Steam helps to thin and drain out the mucus in your nose and sinuses. This may help relieve the congestion. Make it better by adding a few drops of peppermint, eucalyptus or mint essential oil to the water. Even a warm shower can provide temporary relief.

USE A HUMIDIFIER

Moist air soothes the irritated nasal passage.

Low humidity dries out the nasal passage, making it harder to trap and eliminate the germs that settle in your sinuses. This can further aggravate the inflammation and infection. Moist air irrigates the passage, stopping further damage and helping you breathe better.

Drink Up!

This is a must.

Keeping yourself hydrated with lots of fluids—water, broth, lemonade, tender coconut water, herbal tea—helps loosen and thin out the mucus making it easier to expel. Peppermint, chamomile and ginger tea help with congestion. Avoid coffee and other caffeinated beverages that can dehydrate you.



TRADITIONAL TRICKS

Use a Neti pot.

This pot is designed to push water through your nasal passage, clearing it. Learn the technique from an expert. Fill the pot with sterile saline water. Bend over a sink, tilting your head at an angle, so one nostril is above the other. While breathing through the mouth, start pouring the water through the upper nostril. If your technique is right, the water will automatically flow out through the lower nostril.

OIL IT

It really works.

Use a dropper to put a few drops of cold-pressed mustard oil in either nostril. Breathe in and spit the oil out from your mouth. The pungent oil will make you sneeze hard, helping you clear your nose.

1 in 8

Indians suffer from chronic sinusitis caused by inflammation of the nasal and throat lining, according to a 2012 study by The National Institute of Allergy & Infections.



USE A SALINE SPRAY

Take hydration one step further.

Available over the counter, a saline spray (like Otrivin Saline Nasal Spray and Solspre) will irrigate your dry nasal passage and reduce the inflammation. Like Jal Neti, it has no side effects, so can be used as long as needed.



GET AN OTC DECONGESTANT

These provide relief.

A decongestant nasal spray or drops (like Otrivin and Nasivion) can help reduce swelling and ease pain associated with irritated and inflamed nasal passages. Sprays are slightly more expensive, but convenient. However, don't use even an OTC decongestant beyond 3-4 days without checking with your doctor.



ASK FOR AN ANTIHISTAMINE

It works for allergies.

If your stuffy nose is the result of an allergy (not accompanied with fever or headache), you may want to take an antihistamine. This prescription medicine comes as sprays and oral medication. It works by blocking the inflammation-causing histamine that your body produces as a reaction to allergens. Prescription sprays containing corticosteroids also help by reducing inflammation and mucus production.



BAN TOBACCO

According to a study in the *Indian Journal of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology* tobacco users have higher prevalence of rhinitis (55% of tobacco users compared to 12.8% non-tobacco users).

Sources: Dr Girish Raheja, consultant Otolaryngology, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, New Delhi; Dr Arvind Pandey, consultant ENT at Fortis Hospitals, Mumbai; Salila Tiwari, naturopath, founder & chairman of Nature Cure and Yoga Foundation, Uttranchal; Dr Narayan Namboodiri, Ayurvedic physician at SOUKYA International Holistic Health Centre, Bengaluru.

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Right Hair, Right Now

Just shampooing and conditioning may not be enough. Try these 7 versatile hair serums for healthier-looking hair.

BY MEGHNA KRIPLANI

1. Rusk Thermal Serum Hot styling tools—including that trusty blow-dryer you use every day—damage hair, leaving your strands brittle and dry. Protect your tresses with a thermal spray or serum before you bring on the heat. This alcohol-free serum from Rusk has argan oil, which smoothes your mane. ₹1,975.

2. TIGI Bed Head Control Freak Serum Frizzy hair tends to get even more unmanageable when monsoon is hovering around. Tame your mane with this serum, which fights frizz and keeps flyaway strands in check. “It works well for both straight and curly hair,” says Clint Fernandes, *Prevention* advisor and Mumbai-based celebrity make-up artist. Although it promises not to weigh your hair down, Fernandes suggests using a small quantity, as too much can make your hair sticky. This serum also works as a thermal protectant. ₹900.

3. Toni & Guy Classic Shine Gloss Serum This product suits all hair types. Pump a few drops on your palms and work through the length of your hair. “Use just a little and as the last leg of your styling process,” suggests Fernandes. ₹520.

4. L'Oréal Professionnel Mythic Colour Glow Oil Created with 8 oils including argan, linseed, rice bran and cyprus, this

product promises to give your crown a luminous shine. Meant for damaged locks, use a small quantity on damp hair. ₹950.

5. Matrix Biolage Deep Smoothing Serum This multi-faceted serum promises to control frizz and detangle. It smoothes rough ends and protects your curls from humidity. You can use it on both wet or dry hair, before and after you blow dry. ₹275.

6. Kérastase Fibre Architecte Renovation Dual Serum Enriched with the hair protein keratin and natural lipids like ceramides, this serum is for damaged hair, prone to split ends. It claims to repair locks, and make them look healthy and glossy. Apply a small dollop along the length of your mop, after drying. Keep in mind: the effects are temporary and will wash off after you shampoo. ₹1,600.

7. MoroccanOil Hydrating Styling Cream With a blend of anti-oxidant-rich vitamins A and E, this leave-in styling cream conditions and hydrates your mane. A great pick for short and straight hair, you can apply it on wet and dry strands to keep different hairstyles in place, says Fernandes. This product also promises to protect hair against environmental stressors. ₹4,350.

These products have been validated by Prevention experts.



“An Active Lifestyle is Easy!”

Bhawna Oberoi proved that you only need determination to be healthy and fit.



BHAWNA OBEROI | 37 yrs

Then: 94 kg

Now: 61 kg

Biggest Difference: Boost in energy, confidence and reversed hip pain

I've always had a tendency to gain weight. After the birth of my first child in 2007, I was maniacal about losing the pregnancy weight, so I followed crash diets which left me feeling weak and drained of all energy. After my second delivery in 2013, my weight shot up to 94 kg. Not only was it tougher to shed it this time around, but the extra kilos restricted my movement and made my lower back achy and stiff. That is when I decided to take charge and lose weight in a healthy way. I started with walking regularly and did yoga and lost 13 kg in one year. But I soon lost my motivation, until a friend told me how she had lost weight by following a diet plan. This prompted me to consult Dr Shweta Nakra, a dietician based in New Delhi. The diet plan included drinking plenty of fluids throughout the day, limiting my sugar intake and cook-



ing without any oil. She also advised me to walk for 15-20 minutes daily and eat small meals every 2 hours. I was handed a list of fibre-rich foods to pick from. In a few months' time, I lost around 5 kg and gained back my resolve to stay on track.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

While I managed to stick to my diet, it was difficult to take out time for exercise. I had my hands full with 2 little kids and a full-time job. But I soon realised that I didn't need to go to the park or a gym or sacrifice my time with my daughters to stay active. I decided to utilise the time I had at work. So instead of sitting for long hours during client calls, I'd go up to the office terrace and keep walking. Gradually, I was walking 2 to 3 hours every day and my sedentary job had suddenly transformed into an active one. Pretty soon, I saw the results: in 6 months, I had lost 20 kgs! At 61 kilos, I looked and felt amazing!

GOING STRONG

I still have some ground to cover, and aim to lose another 5 kg. A healthy diet and an active lifestyle should take me there. Some days, I ditch the car and take the Metro to work to increase my activity levels. While I do have my weak moments and give in to the occasional *pakora*, I've figured ways to strike a balance and stay focussed. Eating healthy is now a habit, and I'm mindful even when I'm eating out. I pick healthy options such as grilled fish or chicken,

BHAWNA'S DAILY DIET

7.30 AM	1 apple
8.30 AM	Green cardamom water
9.30 AM	Wholewheat sandwich/ 2 egg whites/4 Tbsp poha with veggies
10.30 AM	Green tea
11.30 AM	Green cardamom water
12.00 NOON	Salad with 7-8 vegetables
1.30 PM	Wholewheat veg sandwich and 2 egg whites/grilled or tandoori fish/chicken
2.30 PM	Green tea
3.00 PM	Green cardamom water
4.30 PM	Two multigrain biscuits with green tea/juice of an orange with pulp
5.30 PM	1 fruit
7.30 PM	Soup made of 7-8 veg- etables with pulp/milk with muesli/wholewheat sandwich

and clear soups with veggies and toasted multigrain breads. Now that my daughters are slightly older, I have a little more time for myself and plan to take up running. I've overcome feelings of listlessness and my lack of energy and feel like I can do anything! 🌱

—As told to Sweta Pal

In Focus • **Nutrition**

EAT
THIS
WAY





9 Cooking Secrets That Boost NUTRITION

Did you know that sautéing leafy greens in olive oil instead of steaming, helps you absorb more of the anti-oxidant beta-carotene? Buying healthy food is the first step; preparing it correctly can make or break your nutrient bank. Here are some nutrition-enhancing healthy cooking ideas.

BY RACHEL MELTZER AND PALLAVI SHANKAR



1

Increase good fats to absorb more vitamins.

Adding olive oil, nuts or any other healthy source of fats to colourful fruits and veggies increases the amount of fat-soluble vitamins, such as A, E and K. These nutrients boost vision, improve immunity and protect against stroke and osteoporosis. "Fat acts as a transporter for them," says Mumbai-based nutritionist, Suman Agarwal. The same strategy works for carotenoids, the compounds that give tomatoes their bright colour. Proof: a study from the Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center found that men and women who ate salsa containing chunks of avocado, absorbed 4.4 times as much lycopene and 2.6 times as much beta-carotene than those who enjoyed plain salsa.



2

Marinate meat for safer grilling.

The high heat needed to grill meats can create carcinogenic compounds called heterocyclic amines (HCAs), but marinating can help. When researchers at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in Livermore, California, US, soaked chicken breasts in a mix of brown sugar, olive oil, garlic, mustard, lemon juice and salt for 4 hours, the meat developed up to 99% fewer HCAs after 20 minutes of grilling. "Lowering cooking temperature works too, as it produces fewer HCAs, without losing the flavour of meat. Cook on a low flame for a long time for safe grilling," suggests Dr Suparna Ghosh Jerath, associate professor, IIPH-Delhi.

MAKE IT BETTER: You can also add an extra anti-oxidant kick with this herb-packed soak: ½ c balsamic vinegar; 2 Tbsp fresh rosemary; 1 tsp olive oil, honey and minced garlic; and ½ tsp black pepper.



3

Let garlic act to maximise cancer prevention.

These white pods have cancer-crushing properties. However, high temperatures destroy allinase — garlic's most important cancer-fighting and immunity-boosting enzyme. After chopping, let crushed garlic stand for about 10 to 15 minutes before adding it to a sizzling pan. This allows the pungent herb to generate compounds that blunt the damaging effects of heat, report scientists at Pennsylvania State University and the National Cancer Institute, US. No time to spare? You can always enjoy raw garlic. Crush some fresh pods and spread on toasted bread, top with chopped tomato and onion and a dash of extra-virgin olive oil.



4

Heat tomatoes to help your heart.

"Heating lycopene-rich tomatoes instigates a chemical change that makes the heart-healthy nutrient much easier for your body to absorb," says Jerath. This is why tomato sauce (with no preservatives) is considered healthier than other sauces.

MAKE IT BETTER: Try this recipe: halve tomatoes lengthwise; arrange on a baking sheet, drizzle with olive oil, and season with salt and pepper. Broil for 15 to 20 minutes, until slightly shrivelled, and you have a nutritious snack ready in a jiffy.



5

Dress your salad with herbs for double the anti-oxidants.

Dressing your salad with herbs can more than double its cancer-fighting punch, according to a recent Italian study. When compared with garden salads made with no added herbs, those featuring lemon balm and marjoram had up to 200% more anti-oxidants per serving. Spices such as ginger and cumin also upped the anti-oxidant quotient.



6

Cook acidic foods in a cast-iron pot for 10 times the iron.

Cooking with apples or tomatoes? Heat acidic fruits and veggies in a cast-iron pot or pan to spike the amount of the energy-boosting iron you absorb by more than 2,000%, suggests a Texas Tech University study. "Some iron from the pan leaches into the food, but the amount is too little for you to discern a difference in taste—and it's perfectly safe," explains Shonali Sabherwal, nutritionist and founder of the healthy tiffin service—Soulfood, Mumbai.

MAKE IT BETTER: You don't always have to pull out a pan; coupling certain iron-rich foods with high-acid ones gives a tenfold boost to your iron absorption. When making a spinach salad, toss in mango slices to increase the iron pay-off. Another healthy combo: cereal and strawberries or blueberries.



Eat the peel for an even greater nutrient boost.

Save yourself some time and some key nutrients – by not peeling apples, carrots and other produce before using. "The peel is a natural barrier against nutrient loss, and many vitamins and minerals are found in the outer skin," says Sabherwal. Cucumber skin is loaded with fibre; zucchini is full of lutein, which may help prevent age-related macular degeneration. "Buy organic produce so you can eat the peel or scrub them gently with a natural-bristle brush, and rinse with water to remove traces of pesticide and dust," she suggests. **MAKE IT BETTER:** Add citrus zest. A University of Arizona study linked eating limonene, a compound in lemon and orange peel to 34% reduction in skin cancer.



Opt for larger pieces of produce to boost immunity.

When you're slicing produce, cut large pieces. Many small portions expose more of the produce to nutrient-leaching oxygen. "A larger cut allows you to hold onto more Vitamin C, which bolsters immunity," explains Aggarwal. Quarter veggies instead of dicing them; slice fruits into crescents rather than cubing. "Consume or cook immediately after chopping, else contamination begins," she cautions.



Add lemon juice to meat broth for extra calcium.

Get more calcium by adding lemon juice to your chicken broth as "an acidic medium increases the calcium content of meat," says Delhi-based nutritionist Neelanjana Singh. Pairing a lime-rich broth with on-the-bone chicken boosts the soup's calcium by 64%, according to researchers at Harvard University and Beth Israel Hospital in Boston. **MAKE IT BETTER:** Slathering meat with lemon or vinegar increases its calcium count substantially. [12](#)

NEVER
FALL ILL
AGAIN



A person's arm wearing a yellow boxing glove is raised in a fist, positioned behind the word 'YOUR'. Below, a leg in black athletic wear is bent. The background is a solid light gray.

MUSCLE UP YOUR IMMUNITY

The link between immunity and longevity is getting stronger. Clearly, changing the way you live now will help you reap the benefits as you age. Here, research-backed, expert-recommended secrets for a robust immune system that will keep you strong and healthy.

BY KATHAKOLI DASGUPTA AND
VAIDEHEE DESHPANDE

For most of us, a strong immune system implies less sick leave, being able to avoid seasonal colds, stomach bugs or just about any infection. But research shows that a ramped up immune system goes much further: it helps us age better and live longer.

Noticed how everyone ages at a different pace? Some fast, others like a giant tortoise. According to Dr Mark Liponis, author, *Ultra-Longevity: The Seven-Step Program for a Younger, Healthier You*, the symptoms of ageing (retarded function of the skin, bones, heart, nerves, lungs, kidneys and all other organs) are "caused by an immune system that is far more active than it should be."

When your immune system is at its peak capacity, "it turns on and off at precise times to eradicate pathogens, while not causing chronic inflammation that can lead to other complications such as heart disease and diabetes," says Dr Richard Stanton, senior lecturer at Cardiff Institute of Infection & Immunity in his research paper *Immune Boosting Strategy for Longevity*. Stanton goes on to say, "Serious infections, cancers and inflammatory diseases are amongst the leading causes of premature death in older adults. These disorders all arise from a common cause: the ageing of the immune system or immune senescence." Why? Because immune senescence affects both our innate



When your immune system is at its peak capacity, it turns on and off at precise times to eradicate pathogens, while not causing chronic inflammation.

immunity at birth, the first line of defence as well as our adaptive immunity, which we develop over time as our body is exposed to and builds a memory of the bugs it has encountered. "Because of deficits in the first, older adults find it difficult to fend off new, unseen threats such as an emerging virus or developing cancer cells. Seniors may experience a recurrence of infections their bodies have encountered previously and respond poorly to vaccines," explains Dr Sandeep Budhiraja, director, Max Institute of Internal Medicine, New Delhi. Budhiraja adds that immune senescence is not dependent on our biological age. "Your lifestyle plays a crucial role in the proper functioning of your immune system." Here are habits to adopt, so you never fall ill again.

9 Ways to Up Your Defences

Healthy habits that can help bolster your immunity.

1 Guard Against Stress

Chronic stress such as prolonged job insecurity or a difficult marriage, takes a toll on many aspects of your health, including immunity. There's compelling evidence that this kind of stress (as opposed to the intermittent bad day at work) causes a measurable decline in the immune system's ability to fight infections. Periods of extreme stress can result in a lower natural killer cell count, sluggish killer T-cells and diminished macrophage activity that can amplify the immune response. In fact, a 2013 study by Harvard researchers showed that people who had lost their partners were more likely to get sick during the first year after their spouse passed away than their peers who didn't.

✓ **Do things that relax you! Yoga, meditation, trekking, volunteering or learning a new skill—take your pick.**



2 Kick the Butt

Smoking speeds up ageing. Noticed the tell-tale dry, wrinkled skin of smokers? It also ups the risk of heart disease by clogging up arteries, causes respiratory disorders as well as cancer. Smoking also overstimulates the immune system, marked by an elevated CRP levels (C-reactive protein, a protein in our blood that rises in response to inflammation) and higher levels of WBCs, according to a study in the *American Heart Journal*. Even second-hand smoke can cause immune activation.

✓ **Quit now. Avoid second-hand smoke as much as you can—stay away from friends who smoke. Avoid public spaces and enclosed places where smoking is permitted. The effects of smoking begin to reverse almost as soon as you kick the butt, say experts.**





3. Watch What You Eat

A nutritionally balanced diet is key to a strong immunity. Eat out too often and chances are that you are not getting all the nutrients you need.

✓ **Eat fresh, home-cooked food.** “Pay particular attention to protein (a recent study found 80% Indians are protein deficient), says Chennai-based nutritionist Dharini Krishnan. You need 0.8 to 1 g of protein per kg of body weight. Pack in lean protein in the form of lentils, chicken, eggs and low-fat dairy. Fill your plate with fruits and vegetables, especially purple, blue, red, orange and yellow veggies that are rich in anti-oxidants. Opt for organic foods as far as possible to lower your exposure to harmful toxins.

4. Steer Clear of Antibiotics

“The misuse of antibiotics can weaken your immune system,” says Dr Prasad Rao, director, Department of Internal Medicine & Geriatrics, Medanta—The Medicity, Gurgaon. Researchers found that certain patients taking antibiotics had reduced levels of cytokines, the hormone messengers of the immune system. When your immune system is suppressed, you are more likely to develop bacterial resistance or become sick in the future. “Antibiotics also destroy healthy bacteria in the gut which weakens your defences,” adds Dr Ajay Kumar, head, Dept of Gastroenterology, at Fortis Escorts Heart Institute, New Delhi.

✓ **Take antibiotics only for bacterial infections and only when prescribed. Remember to complete the course.**



5. Exercise Regularly

The more physically fit and active you are, the less likely you are to fall ill. When researchers compared sedentary people with those who walked briskly almost every day, they found that the inactive group took twice as much sick leave in 4 months. "Exercise helps flush out toxins, increases the circulation of the body's immune system cells and prevents pathogens from growing due to the associated temperature rise," says *Prevention* advisor and Pune-based Reebok master trainer Nisha Varma. A report in the *American Journal of Cardiology* showed that exercise lowered CRP. Another article in the *Journal of American Medical Association* showed that overweight women were almost 8 to 10 times more likely to have a hyperactive immune system—with high levels of CRP—than women of healthy weight. Need more reason to lace up? Studies have linked impaired breathing to immune activation. Why? Because when you don't breathe deeply, your system senses a threat and signals its forces to gear up for battle. In fact, a 29-year-old University of Buffalo, US health study showed that pulmonary function and breathing capacity were excellent predictors of longevity.

✓ **Keep moving! Aim for at least 30 minutes each day, says Varma. If you are overweight, work with a fitness expert and dietician to shed the kilos. Try yoga and pranayama that focus on deep breathing, adds Varma.**



Foods for Immunity

Dr Issac Mathai, SOUKYA International Holistic Health Centre, Bengaluru, recommends these:

YOGHURT: Rich in good bacteria, it helps to balance the gut flora. Combine it with prebiotics like flaxseeds, legumes and garlic to get best benefits.

MUSHROOMS: A super source of zinc, crucial for maintaining the number of immune fighters, T-cells.

NUTS AND SEEDS: A great source of Omega-3s and selenium; both tackle immune hyperactivity.

ALSO EAT: Amla, tulsi and turmeric.





6

Look at the Bright Side

You may eat healthy, sleep 8 hours a night and exercise daily, but researchers have discovered a much simpler way to boost immunity, and it's as easy as watching a sunrise. A study in the journal *Emotion* found that positive emotions—especially awe, the feeling you get seeing the wonders of nature—are linked to markers of good health. Other positive emotions like pride, joy and contentment also help boost immunity, the study found.

✓ **Explore the great outdoors (See *Nature's Therapy*). Look for reasons—however small—to feel lucky every day. Make time for yourself for a favourite activity, or simply help another person—it will bring a smile to your face. Oh and don't forget sex. Loving and feeling loved revs immunity. Now that's the kind of Rx that does not seem hard!**

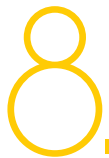


7.

Get Some Company

Grabbing a quick sandwich at your desk? Try socialising with the lunch crowd in the cafeteria instead. Researchers who monitored 276 people between the ages of 18 and 55 found that those who had 6 or more connections were 4 times better at fighting off the viruses that cause colds than those with fewer friends.

✓ **Don't let a jam-packed workday or hectic schedule get in the way of your friendships. Stop by a co-worker's office for a quick catch-up and call a different friend each day during your daily commute!**



Breathe Easy

Chronic exposure to pollution, specifically fine particulate matter (PM), can cause inflammation. Besides putting you at a higher risk

for asthma and other respiratory diseases, breathing polluted air over a long time can damage your immune system. Research has shown that two classes of common pollutants, aromatic hydrocarbons and phthalates, are particularly disruptive to immune B-cells. Hydrocarbons are produced every time something organic is burnt (car fuels, power plants); while phthalates are leached from hundreds of products containing plasticizers (plastic bags, cosmetics), and both of these are ubiquitous in our environment.

✓ **The obvious solution is moving to an area that is less polluted. But that may not always be an option. So plan outdoor activities early in the morning or late in the evening as air pollution is highest in the daytime. Use the recycled air option on your air conditioner to cut down fumes while driving, and cover your nose and mouth with a handkerchief while outdoors. Eat foods rich in anti-oxidants to stay healthy.**



9.

Mind the Zs

Scrimping on sleep has a powerfully detrimental effect on immunity. "Our body needs 7 to 8 hours of sleep daily to function at optimal levels," says Rao. "Sleep deprivation can suppress the immune system leaving you more prone to infections." During sleep, the immune system releases proteins called cytokines, some of which promote sleep while others are required to fight an infection or inflammation. Sleep deprivation reduces the production of these, other infection-fighting cells and antibodies.

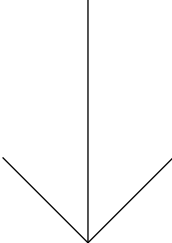
✓ **Stop pulling those all-nighters! Most adults need between 7 to 8 hours of uninterrupted rest every night, but how you feel in the morning and throughout the day may be a better gauge. If you're tired when you wake up in the morning, you're not clocking enough hours or compromising on the quality of sleep. For those of you who work night shifts, make sure you are getting enough sleep during the day. (See *The Integrative MD*)** [↗](#)



+ Sage leaves
+ Hot water
+ 10 min

So Long, Sore Throat

Wha-a-a?
Turn to p. 94
to find out
how it works.



Surprising HOME CURES THAT WORK

***Research-tested, doctor-approved
ways to cure what ails you with [what's already in your house](#).***

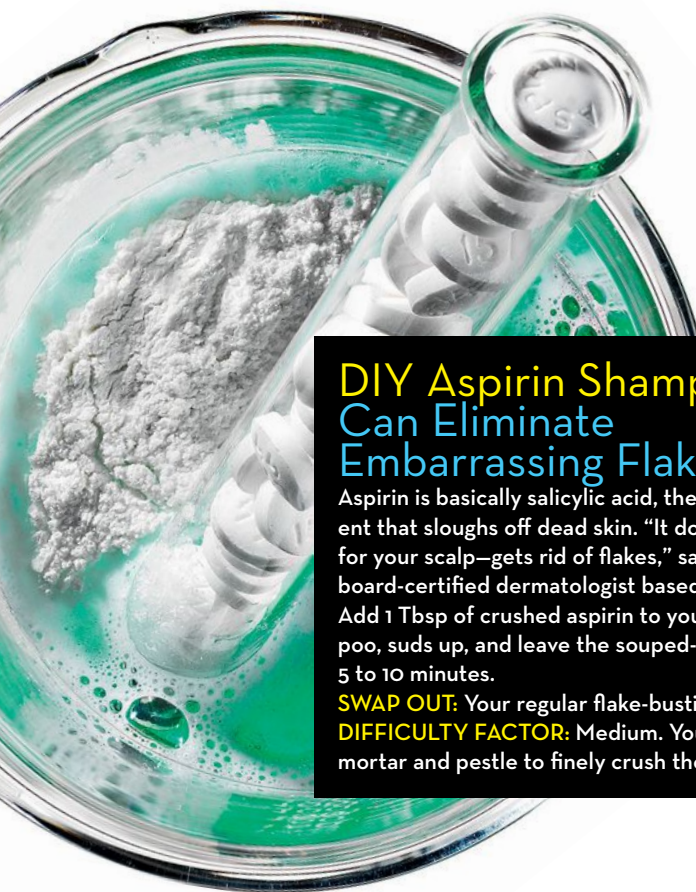
BY EMMA HAAK | PHOTOGRAPHS BY GREGOR HALENDA

[Home remedies](#), no matter who swears they work, are more often bunk than bona fide fixes. But some actually do have science on their side and, in fact, perform even better than their traditional medical counterparts. We dug into the research, talked with the experts and found 18 treatments that passed muster.

White wine vinegar
+ Warm water
+ 15 min daily

Cuticle Infections Cleared Up

The natural antibacterial properties of vinegar can eliminate infections caused by an over-zealous manicurist or by picking at cuticles.



DIY Aspirin Shampoo Can Eliminate Embarrassing Flakes

Aspirin is basically salicylic acid, the anti-acne ingredient that sloughs off dead skin. "It does the same thing for your scalp—gets rid of flakes," says Marie Jhin, a board-certified dermatologist based in San Francisco. Add 1 Tbsp of crushed aspirin to your regular shampoo, suds up, and leave the souped-up shampoo in for 5 to 10 minutes.

SWAP OUT: Your regular flake-busting shampoo
DIFFICULTY FACTOR: Medium. You'll likely need a mortar and pestle to finely crush the aspirin.



Mom Was Right: Ginger Really Does Ease Nausea

How? It accelerates stomach emptying and helps break up and release intestinal gas, says Stephen Hanauer, a professor of gastroenterology and hepatology at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine. Sip on ginger ale or ginger tea, or slowly eat a few candies made with real ginger.

SWAP OUT: Curling up around the toilet in the foetal position

DIFFICULTY FACTOR: Simple. The steps: send loved one to store; procure ginger product; ingest.

60% OF MIGRAINE SUFFERERS WHO HAD SEX DURING AN ATTACK REPORTED FEELING BETTER.

But don't just go through the motions—43% of those who found relief in the sheets said their symptoms improved only after an orgasm, according to a study in the journal *Cephalalgia*. The researchers speculate that endorphins may cause pain to subside.



Tulsi leaf juice + Calcium carbonate

Bye-bye bee sting

When a bee stings, it injects an acidic liquid into our bodies. Using the alkaline calcium carbonate can help neutralise it. In addition, consider using tulsi, an anti-inflammatory agent that helps reduce the pain, says Dr R Shubha, consultant naturopath at SOUKYA International Holistic Health Centre, Bengaluru.

Get Queasy in Cars? Suck on a Lemon

Motion sickness is often accompanied by excess salivating. Tannins (bitter, astringent plant compounds) found in lemons (olives, too) dry out the mouth, eliminating saliva and, in turn, easing “oh God, not here,” nausea, says Hanauer.

SWAP OUT: Dorky acupressure wristbands

DIFFICULTY FACTOR: Easy—as long as you don’t mind making the worst sour-taste face of your life.

Caffeinate Your Eyes to Wake Them Up

Don't toss teabags after brewing them, instead refrigerate in a ziplock bag. Softly place the chilled bags on your eyes for 10 minutes. "It will help constrict underlying blood vessels, forcing out some of the liquid that causes puffiness, tightening the skin in the area," says Mumbai-based dermatologist Dr Aparna Santhanam. Any teabag helps, but because green tea has both anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidant properties, it is even more effective, she adds.

SWAP OUT: Ice packs and gel masks

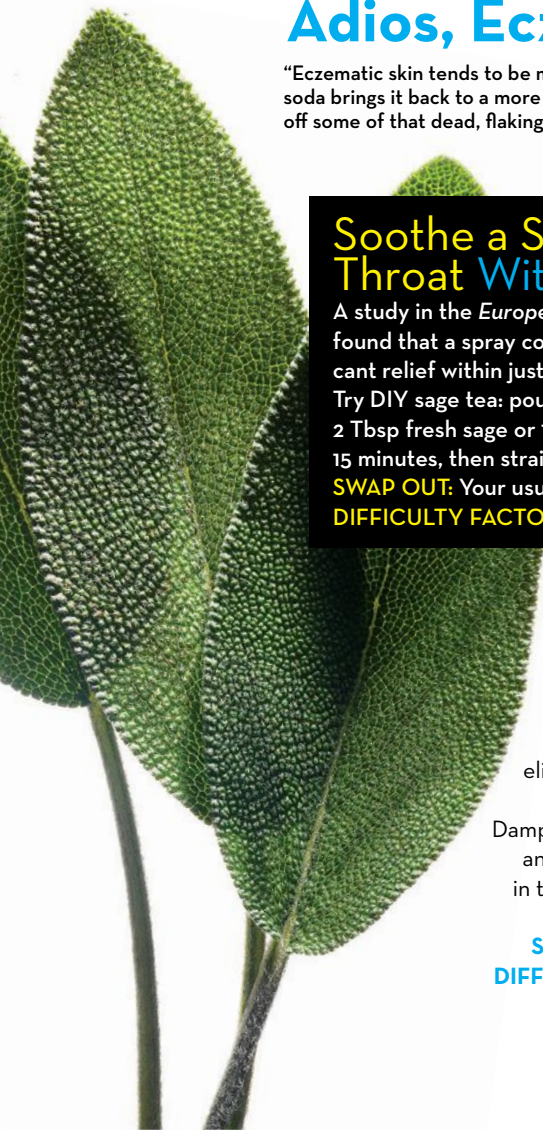
DIFFICULTY FACTOR: Very easy. All you need is tea bags and water to steep.



- Ground licorice (mulethi)**
- + Oil (coconut or olive)**
- + Plastic wrap**
- + 1 Cotton sock**

Corn-Free Feet

Coating the affected area with a mixture of licorice and oil, then covering it with plastic wrap and a sock while you sleep, gives the oestrogen-like substances in licorice time to work their softening magic, says DeHeer.

- 
- 1 Tbsp baking soda
 - + Warm bathwater
 - + 15 min 3X/wk
-

Adios, Eczema

"Eczematic skin tends to be more acidic, and baking soda brings it back to a more neutral pH and sloughs off some of that dead, flaking skin," Jhin says.

Soothe a Sore Throat With Sage Tea

A study in the *European Journal of Medical Research* found that a spray containing 15% sage offered significant relief within just 2 hours, compared with a placebo. Try DIY sage tea: pour 1 cup of almost-boiling water over 2 Tbsp fresh sage or 1 Tbsp dried. Cover and steep 10 to 15 minutes, then strain.

SWAP OUT: Your usual tea-with-honey concoction

DIFFICULTY FACTOR: No sweat.

Stinky Feet, Meet Rubbing Alcohol

Its dehydrating properties kill flourishing bacteria and fungus and eliminate excess perspiration problems at the root of odours, says DeHeer. Dampen a cotton ball with rubbing alcohol and wipe over the bottoms of your feet in the morning to minimise moisture and control odour all day.

SWAP OUT: Odour-eliminating inserts

DIFFICULTY FACTOR: Know how to hold a cotton ball? Then you're good.

Put the Freeze on Migraines

Applying ice to your temples or the back of your neck for 10 to 15 minutes numbs the nerve that's sending the pain signal and constricts blood vessels. Plus, the icy sensation on your skin helps distract from the pain, says Lawrence Newman, a board-certified neurologist and director of the Headache Institute at Mount Sinai Roosevelt in New York City.

SWAP OUT: OTC painkillers that don't make a dent in your discomfort anyway

DIFFICULTY FACTOR:

Lower than low.



36%

**REDUCTION IN
PEAK-SEASON
RESPIRATORY TRACT
INFECTIONS, THANKS TO
GARGLING WITH WATER**

Start swishing at the first sign of trouble. If you're dealing with tonsillitis rather than a regular cough, add some salt to help clear out the bits of food that can get stuck in the tonsils and often cause the problem.

Source: American Journal of Preventive Medicine

Your Feet Will Smell Like Garlic, But Your Athlete's Foot Will Be Gone

A study in the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology* reported that ajoene, an antifungal compound found in garlic, can reduce the signs and symptoms of every gym-goer's worst foe. Crush a few cloves, mix with olive oil and use a cotton ball to rub the mixture on the affected area several times a day until the infection clears up.

SWAP OUT: Conventional athlete's foot treatments

DIFFICULTY FACTOR:

Basic. Any novice cook can handle crushing some garlic.



Replace the Ringing in Your Ears with the Great Outdoors

A research published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Audiology* found that digitally-produced sounds mimicking nature and water provided significant relief from tinnitus.

SWAP OUT: More invasive and pricey fixes like meds and hearing aids

DIFFICULTY FACTOR: Pretty straightforward. You'll just need a white-noise machine with nature sound settings or a nature sound app on your phone.



Make Swimmer's Ear Cry Uncle With a Little Vinegar

"Vinegar acidifies the external auditory canal, killing the bacteria that cause swimmer's ear," says Lucian Sulica, an otolaryngologist at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center. Dilute white vinegar with an equal amount of distilled water and, using an eyedropper, put 3 drops in the affected ear 3 times daily.

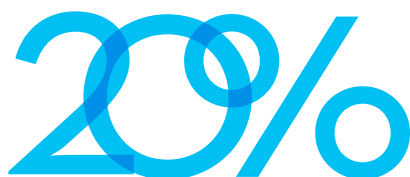
SWAP OUT: OTC products that dry out the ear canal

DIFFICULTY FACTOR: Medium. Best to enlist a buddy to do the dropping.



"Help, My Tooth Hurts!"

Chew on a clove. "This Indian kitchen staple is your best alternative to painkillers that come loaded with side effects. Clove helps to temporarily numb the area, reducing pain," says Dr Shijoe Matthew, Ayurvedic physician at Ananda-In The Himalayas. Besides, clove is known for its antiseptic and anti-inflammatory benefits, perfect to numb an aching tooth," says Mathew. If you stock clove oil, you could even soak a ball of cotton wool in it and hold gently against the painful tooth to find relief, he adds.



20%

LOWER

SELF-REPORTED
ANXIETY

AND **25%**
LESS FRUSTRATION
AFTER SMELLING
PEPPERMINT
ESSENTIAL OIL

Research from Wheeling Jesuit University suggests keeping this feel-good scent on hand to sniff when stress levels start to bubble over.

Home Remedy Hoaxes

DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE

FLAXSEED FOR HOT FLASHES

A small study from the Mayo Clinic found that women reported fewer hot flashes after eating flaxseeds daily for 6 weeks. But a follow-up disproved the findings.

FISH OIL FOR MIGRAINES

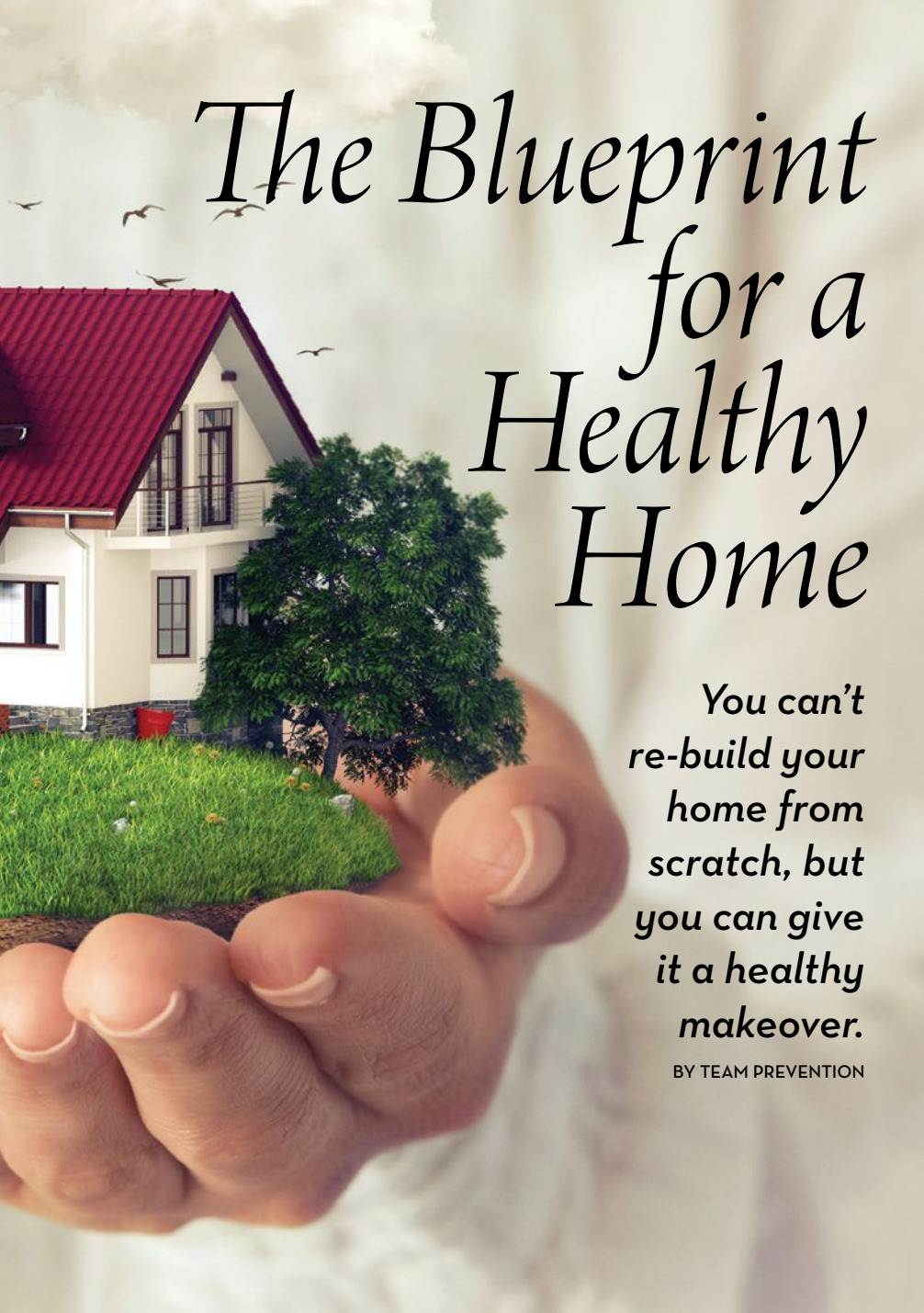
University of Cincinnati researchers reported that fish oil reduced migraine woes, compared with a placebo. More recent research found no benefit.

CLOVES FOR CUTS

Not a total hoax, but proceed with caution. Cloves, rich in the antiseptic chemical eugenol, can be applied to cuts to help prevent infection. But eugenol also appears to slow blood clotting. So before you use clove, be sure the bleeding has stopped. 

—With inputs from Kathakoli Dasgupta





The Blueprint for a Healthy Home

**You can't
re-build your
home from
scratch, but
you can give
it a healthy
makeover.**

BY TEAM PREVENTION

Whether it's asthma or obesity, it all originates in your home. Detoxify your living space, change your lifestyle and switch up your habits in the one place that matters the most. It's often as simple as placing a potted plant here or clearing the clutter there. Here, easy ways to reinvent your living area.

Your Slimmer Pantry Plan

Healthy Living



Make it smarter: Tweak

your eating, cooking, grocery shopping and storing habits to maintain weight and ward off diseases.

Happiness hub: Invest in wholegrains, nuts and organic foods.

Fighting persistent food cravings is easier when you've got an arsenal of healthy options in-house. When you're buying your groceries, pile your cart with nuts and seeds in bulk (it's cheaper this way). Pick up almonds, walnuts, groundnuts, flaxseeds, watermelon, sunflower seeds and other local varieties. "With a low GI (glycaemic index) and high satiety value, seeds and nuts make for healthy snacks," says Dharini Krishnan, nutritionist, Chennai. Fresh seasonal fruits like bananas, mango and watermelon are also easy to stock, and last for 3-4 days. Check out the organic shelves for veggies and fruits, and be careful while buying fish. "Choose fish that looks firm, has shiny flesh, clear eyes (minus the cloudiness), bounces back when touched and does not have a foul smell," suggests Delhi-based

nutritionist Ritika Samaddar. Buy eggs and chicken, preferably organic or free-range ones, from a hygienic store. Wash eggs before stocking them in the fridge. Keep meat and fish in sealed bags in the freezer. You could also try the traditional practice of freezing fish after sprinkling it with salt and turmeric. For masalas and grains, organic options win hands down.

Have balanced meals with enough proteins, good carbs and vitamins. Include leafy greens, brown rice and wholegrains (wholewheat, oats, bajra, ragi and other millets) in your diet. Prepare them in interesting ways: spinach chips, wholewheat cakes, etc. (For healthy cooking tips, check *9 Cooking Secrets That Up The Nutrition of Your Food*). Don't cut down on cheese and other milk products, unless there is an allergy. A study in the *British Journal of Nutrition* found that having a small slice of cheese 30 minutes before bed leads to better sleep and improved metabolism the next day. Also, keep healthy foods in an approachable place like on the dining table or the top shelf of your fridge, and keep sugar- and sodium-laden treats out of sight.



Allergy-Free Homes

These simple measures can help your home steer clear of allergens and dust mites.

» Keep mattresses, pillows and stuffed animals in the sun for a few hours at least once a week.

“Vacuuming is not enough; if you want to eliminate dust mites, you need to air them out,” says Dr Shubnum Singh, senior consultant, Allergy Clinic, Max Multi Speciality Centre, New Delhi.

» Keep indoor plants away from the air-conditioner vents. “This way you’ll keep the fungus in the soil from spreading across the room,” she adds.

» Replace large carpets with throws and area rugs, and choose wood furniture over upholstered pieces to reduce the number of surfaces dust mites can breed in.

» Keep tile grouts as clean as possible, so as to keep fungus from propagating. “Use disinfectants regularly, and keep your bathroom dry at all

times,” suggests Singh.

» Dust mites and fungus can also nest in AC vents and filters. Get your ACs cleaned regularly, as per the manufacturer’s instructions.

Save energy by keeping heat sources like ovens and microwaves away from the fridge, so as not to force them to overwork to maintain a cool temperature.



Calmer Bedroom Your No-Disturb Zone



Make it smarter: Banish television and gadgets.

Happiness hub: Been feeling crabby and miserable? Perhaps you're not getting enough Zs.

A study published in the *Cognitive Therapy and Research* found that going to bed later can make you more anxious. Before you blame that evening cup of Joe, take a look around your bedroom. "If you want sound sleep, your bedroom needs to be a minimal-disturbance zone," says Dr Sanjay Manchanda, senior consultant, Sleep Medicine, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi. And to achieve that, you need to show all your gadgets, including your TV, the way out of your bedroom. "Light-emitting devices, be it your smartphone or the television, disrupt sleep by adversely affecting the levels of the sleep hormone melatonin," he explains. Moreover,

the constant beep coming from your trusty phone also hampers deep sleep whether you realise it or not.

While you're at it, remove all clocks from your bedroom, especially if you have trouble sleeping. "When you can't fall asleep, your first instinct is to check the wall clock or your smartphone to see the time. This in turn keeps you awake," says Manchanda. Can't wake up without an alarm? Keep your alarm clock at a not-so-easily-reachable distance, so that every time you're tempted to check the time, the effort involved discourages you.

Painting your bedroom walls in a blue hue might help too. According to a study carried out in the United Kingdom across 2,000 homes, people who sleep in rooms with blue walls tend to get much better rest, and up to 8 hours of sleep. The survey linked the colour to calm soothing feelings as well as lower heart rate and blood pressure.

Clutter-Free Kids' Rooms Less Stress



Make it smarter: Choose fun (inexpensive) shelves, cubbyholes, bookcases or storage boxes.

Happiness hub: Create a nook in the kids' room where children can play and store their toys and other belongings.

Kids' rooms tend to be the most cluttered in the entire house as they are a catch-all for toys, games, clothes, craft and school work, musical instruments and everything else that kids seem to collect. A cluttered room means your child will be more stressed and will take longer to locate things in her room, while a clean one helps her learn organisation skills and also helps her stay focussed and calm. "While planning or buying furniture, look for pieces that are multifunctional," says Delhi-based interior designer Aanchal Gulati Nath, partner at Studio US Design.

Kids grow out of things quickly, so a study table that can be used for a few years with an adjustable height feature works. A bed that can be used as a sofa by day and bed by night and has a storage facility saves space, and can be used from the toddler to the tween years. "Make sure that everything in the room has a place for itself, where the child can put it back once she is done using it. Inculcate the habit to clean up after play," says Bengaluru-based interior designer Husna Rahaman. Choose furniture that comes with storage space that your child can reach for easily – vertical hanging racks or a cubbyhole shelf are good picks.

Invest in multifunctional furniture that can be used for stacking toys and other supplies. Make sure everything in the room has a designated place.



Your Green Patch Growing Food



Make it smarter: Plant herbs that repel mosquitoes.

Happiness hub: Grow your own garden—in your backyard or balcony.

Having your own garden can do more than giving your family a fresh supply of greens—all the squatting required works your core. A Seattle-based study found that gardening an hour per week cuts the risk of cardiac arrest by 66%. For beginners “you need essentials like diggers (of different shapes), clay pots, watering cans, hose pipes for big gardens, water sprinkler, coco-peat-mixed soil and compost (make it at home by putting kitchen waste in a bin and adding slake lime to it),” advises Delhi-based gardening expert Aruna Ludra, also author of *Four Seasons Gardening In India*. Those with a small balcony can dabble with pots or even vertical gardening—where you grow everything from coriander to pansies on a wall or gate. During wet weather, herbs like lemon balm and basil will ward off mosquitoes. Crush their leaves and rub the juice on your skin.

Safety Checks

Avoid accidents and be prepared for any emergency.

- » Keep emergency contact numbers, like that of your GP, pharmacy, friendly neighbours, nearest police station, fire station and ambulance handy. Pin it up on the fridge or store them in your phone.
- » Stock a first-aid kit. It should have bandages and antiseptics for cuts and bleeding; topical ointments, like silver sulfadiazine and burnol for small burns; and OTC drugs for cough, cold, fever, indigestion and allergies.
- » Keep meds, toxic liquids and substances locked in a drawer your child can't reach.
- » Invest in a fire extinguisher.
- » Tape plug points shut if you have young children in your home. Or look into electrical safety socket covers.

Source: Dr Ashendu Pandey, CEO, CK Birla Hospitals, Kolkata





Safer Seniors' Spaces

Fall Proof



Make it smarter: Remove or avoid safety hazards.

Happiness hub: Install night lights in hallways and bathrooms, and light switches at both the top and bottom of the stairs.

About one-third of the elderly population over the age of 65 suffer falls each year, and the risk increases with age. What's more, many of these falls happen in the comfort of their own homes, making senior-proofing your house, a priority. An important step towards preventing falls at home is to remove anything that could cause seniors to trip or slip while walking, says Nath. Remove small furniture, electrical and/or phone cords and throw rugs that can get in the way.

Not just safety, seniors also require ease of function and use around the house. "Install grab bars in bath-

About
one-third of
the elderly
population over 65
suffers falls each year,
and this risk increases
as they get older.
**Solution: senior-
proof your
home.**

rooms, and railings wherever there are stairs or a difference in floor levels," says Rahaman. Make sure you place anti-skid mats in the wet areas of the washroom. Put storage boxes and utility items like medicine boxes, books and mobile chargers at convenient heights as bending for seniors can be problematic. Keep lightweight furniture like dining chairs and stools in living areas, so that seniors can pull chairs without assistance, when needed. Put emergency contact numbers on speed dial in their phones. [▶](#)



Hate working out?
Your genes could
be to blame.



It's Not YOU

It's Your DNA

Workouts are about to stop sucking for good. Master the bold new science of exercise genetics and you'll capture new motivation, finally rev your metabolism and leave these 6 frustrations behind.

BY CINDY KUZMA | PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN SAELINGER

We've all met them. They are the naturals. The bendy woman in yoga class pre-engineered to nail asanas like she's made of clay. The friend who needs only 1 kilo dumb-bells to pop Cameron Diaz-like biceps. That peppy guy who clearly sprang from the womb wearing his fitness instructor uniform.

You, meanwhile, haven't felt motivated to walk fast since some weirdo followed you in the parking lot. You can do strength routines for weeks without detecting a hint of triceps definition. Instead of the promised results, you've found frustration. You've maybe even beat yourself up for all the missed goals.

Well, you can check that little blame game at the genetics lab door. According to breaking research, it's not necessarily that you lack willpower; you just got stuck with the short end of a workout double helix. Turns out one in six of us is genetically destined to get hardly any response from endurance training and one in five has a handicapped metabolism. Scores of us have the genes that make sitting in a chair heaven on earth and going to the gym as uncomfortable as dental surgery.

Is this arbitrary allotment of workout enthusiasm and excellence fair? No. Are you allowed to whine about it? Yes, for exactly 2 nights of *Downton Abbey* binge watching. But then it's

liberation time. Now that you know there are natural shortcomings built into your genetic code, use these tests to figure out exactly what they are and how to overcome them. You still won't love what your DNA doesn't want you to love. But at least your genes won't keep you out of your favourite jeans any longer.

1 You get no joy from working out.

Scientists have only begun to uncover the many ways genetics can sway your motivation to move. But they have pinpointed a bunch of genes linked to brain chemicals—like serotonin and dopamine—and to the brain's reward system, which scientists believe predisposes some people to derive pleasure from pushing themselves. The rest may be at a disadvantage, experiencing high intensity interval training as torture and even moderate sweat sessions as uncomfortable. Each individual gene in question likely has only a small effect—say, less than 1%—on how enjoyable exercise is, according to researcher Angela Bryan, who studies the genetic underpinnings of exercise behaviours. But together, genes add up. When University of Missouri scientists selectively mated rats that logged the most kilometres on their running wheels, they found 36 genes that may be involved—and ended up with rodents 10 times more naturally active than those bred for laziness.



You start strong
but fade fast?
You may have
inherited genetic
roadblocks.



Always sucking
wind? Your
grandmom may
have huffed and
puffed, too.

Is it your DNA? Consult your memory for proof your genetic blueprint spells couch potato: if you can't recall ever looking forward to moving—not even playing hopscotch or tag with your buddies—you may be stuck with the don't-get-up-and-go genome, says University of Texas researcher Molly Bray.

The fix: Start by laughing out loud. You face an absurd disadvantage, and

nothing works better than humour to keep you positive, says San Francisco-based sports psychologist Michelle Cleere. Then put on your game face, because one of the only ways to outsmart deadbeat genes is to set a goal (say, your first 5K or 10K) and make it nearly impossible to miss a step along the way. Schedule every workout and come up with specific plans—like popping in a 10-minute DVD if you

oversleep or running on the treadmill if it's raining—to thwart excuses. You can employ strategies to make exercise fun: music, dance, games, says Bray.

2 You're always out of breath.

Winded before the warm-up ends? Blame it on a low VO2 max, a measure of endurance based on how much oxygen your muscles use. One of the largest studies of exercise genetics found that both your baseline VO2 max—that is, how fit you'd be if you never left the couch—and your ability to improve it are tied to your DNA. On identical training plans, about 10 to 15% of people will remain huffing and puffing, getting very little increase in VO2 max. Another lucky 10 to 15% will net almost a 50% increase, while the rest of us fall in the middle, according to geneticist and Heritage Family Study researcher Tuomo Rankinen, of the Pennington Biomedical Research Center in Baton Rouge, LA.

Is it your DNA? Genetic tests purporting to predict this training response can't give you the complete picture, Rankinen says. Instead, you can visit select health and fitness clubs and hospitals and ask for a VO2 max test. You'll walk away knowing your current tap-out point and can retest in a few months to see if you've improved.

The fix: You'll have to commit to the formula you've been ducking for years:

high-intensity interval workouts. Do 2 each week, pushing hard to the winded point for 30 to 60 seconds, then walking or pedalling slowly for an equal or longer time frame. Start with 4 rounds and work up to 8 or even 10, says Mark McClusky, the author of *Faster, Higher, Stronger: How Sports Science Is Creating a New Generation of Super-Athletes—and What We Can Learn from Them*. After 6 weeks, you should finally notice more stamina. Look forward to it.

3 You never get any stronger.

If you've never moved a sack of rice or pried open a pickle jar without calling for backup, you may be able to point a finger at your family tree. Your inherited baseline of strength and stamina is based on your mix of muscle fibres. Most of us have about half fast-twitch (FT, what sprinters and powerlifters are born with more of) and half slow-twitch (ST, what endurance runners have in spades), says Massachusetts-based exercise scientist Wayne Westcott. If you have a rough time building brawn, he says, your current workout might not be playing to your genetic strengths.

Is it your DNA? To find out if your muscles lean more toward FT or ST, you could submit to an expensive muscle biopsy. Or try Westcott's DIY estimate: on a leg-extension or chest-press machine,

find the heaviest weight at which you can do just a single rep with good form. Return exactly 5 minutes later and set up the machine with 75% of that weight. (So if you could lift 50 kilos once, reduce it to 37.) Count the reps you can do before complete fatigue sets in. Manage 8 to 12 reps and you have an average 50-50 mix of FT and ST. Do fewer than that and you likely have more FT; do more and you probably have more ST.

The fix: For starters, ditch the 1 kilo dumbbells. But how much more weight you need depends on your fibres. FT ones tire more quickly, which means they'll get stronger faster with heavier weights and fewer reps. So if you lean that way, choose weights that allow you to do just 4 to 8 reps per set. But if you're super ST, you're geared for endurance exercise: drop to an amount that allows you to complete 13 to 16 reps with proper form for each set. Fall around 50-50? Split the difference and go for a weight you can lift well for 8 to 12 reps. Once the last rep feels easy, increase the weight. Then stand back, flex and admire your results.

4 You're as flexible as a pencil.

Call them yoga genes: bits of DNA that encode for the production of collagen—a protein that provides strength and elasticity to your skin and liga-

ments—and can influence the pliability of your body. Studies on twins show that, depending on the joint tested, as little as 50% (lower back and hamstring) or as much as 91% (shoulder) of differences in flexibility can be attributed to factors passed down through generations. One rare mutation causes Ehlers-Danlos (EDS) syndrome, a group of conditions featuring hyper-mobile skin and joints.

Is it your DNA? Freakily flexible sorts can test for EDS mutations by seeing if they can touch the tips of their tongues to their noses or bend their fingers all the way backward. For the rest of us, it's not quite as clear. However, if you've been doing yoga religiously for the past few months and still don't see much improvement in your Forward Fold or Backbend, there's a good chance you can blame some of that stiffness on good ol' Mom and Dad.

The fix: Whether you're genetically inflexible or just tight from too much sitting, you can loosen up by building in 10 minutes a day for stretching, preferably after your workout, when muscles are warm, says stretching expert Malachy McHugh, of the Nicholas Institute of Sports Medicine and Athletic Trauma at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York. Be sure to perform each stretch for at least 60 seconds—a 2014 study found that doing so significantly improved flexibility after 7 days and predicted long-term payoffs in pliability.



The floor seems kilometres away? The ability to touch your toes could be passed down through generations.



Your friends
firm up faster?
You might be a
genetic outlier.

5 You just can't seem to tone up.

Melt flab and you hope to reveal toned abs underneath—not another layer of jiggle. But not everyone constructs muscle tissue at the same rate. If you look in the mirror after several months of resistance exercise and see no changes—or if you do the same moves a friend does but have less to show for the effort—it's possible you're among the approximately 30% of people who respond less robustly to muscle-building programmes, says Marcos Bamman, director of the University of Alabama at Birmingham's Center for Exercise Medicine.

One newly-discovered reason is that some of us have more satellite stem cells—which work to repair and rebuild muscle in response to strength training—than others do. In fact, research shows that people with more of these cells at the start of a strength-training programme appear to gain more muscle. Other genes influence how efficiently these cells donate their raw materials to your quads or triceps after a tough training session, says Bamman.

Is it your DNA? Sorry, you can't learn your number of satellite cells unless you're in a research study. But you can assess how hard it is for you to tone, says Westcott. Strike a traditional biceps-

flexing pose with your right arm, making a tight fist. Use the width of the fingers on your left hand to measure the distance between the bend of your right arm and the start of the biceps bulge. The average person can fit 2 fingers, while muscle-mag cover models can fit one at most. If you can fit 3 or more, your overall muscle size is relatively low, meaning you likely have the antibuffing genes.

The fix: Alas, there's no such thing as a satellite cell transplant. But whatever the state of your satellite cells, you won't see results without proper nutrition. Within 30 minutes of your cardio or strength-training session, aim for a 200-to 300-calorie snack with at least 20 g of protein. Whey protein (try it in a shake) and eggs contain the most leucine—defined as "the amino acid that is a spark plug for the processes underlying muscle building and repair" by Atlanta sports dietitian Marie Spano.



Your sluggish metabolism won't speed up.

How well you burn calories is closely tied to your number of mitochondria, the mighty cell powerhouses that pump out energy for muscles to feed on. Thing is, regular exercise increases their size and number for some people much more than for others, says Lauren Sparks, a researcher at the Translational Research Institute for Metabolism and Diabetes in Orlando.

This is partly due to roadblocks that are programmed into our genes, leaving us unable to reap the metabolic rewards, says Sparks. While most people will see mitochondrial gains quickly—in one study of sedentary men and women in their late 60s, those who walked on a treadmill or rode an exercise bike for 30 to 40 minutes for 4 to 6 days a week increased their volume by as much as 69% in 12 weeks—for up to a fifth of people, this perk is blunted.

Is it your DNA? This test doubles as a fitness plan: sweat religiously—more than usual—for 10 weeks, tracking your weight and your blood sugar levels, which can show how efficiently your body burns food to make energy. If your numbers don't budge, your metabolism may be a genetic outlier.

The fix: Even if you're not a huge mito responder, you can still stoke your metabolism by firing up the intensity of your workouts (see no 2). "The harder you push, the bigger your afterburn," says Alabama-based exercise physiologist Michele Olson. "But you really have to work out hard to reach that state—working at an intensity of at least 90% of your maximum heart rate—where your body continues to burn calories for minutes to hours after you finish your workout." There can't be any shortcuts here, that's true. But hey, at least you've beaten the yoga bendy woman in the genetic smarts department. 🍷

Stop Hairfall.

15

reasons
why you're
losing
hair
(and How You
Can Save It)

Have you been shedding more hair than usual?

Chances are your lifestyle and hair styling choices are to blame. Here's how you can stop the damage now.

BY MEGHNA KRIPLANI





1

saboteur

menopause

When menopause strikes, the level of female hormones (oestrogen and progesterone) in the body drop, thereby increasing the effect of male hormones (a.k.a. androgens) that cause hair to fall. "About 40% of women experience hair thinning post menopause," says dermatologist Chiranjiv Chhabra, Skin Alive Clinics, New Delhi. "High androgen levels adversely affect the metabolism of the hair root," explains Dr Apratim Goel, cosmetic dermatologist of the Mumbai-based Cutis Skin Studio. "However, hair loss in this case is only limited to the front and side of the scalp," Goel adds.

Save Your Strands: *Consult a dermat who might suggest topical solutions, along with other treatments like platelet-rich plasma injections and peptide mesotherapy. "In most cases, a multi-therapy approach works best," suggests Chhabra.*

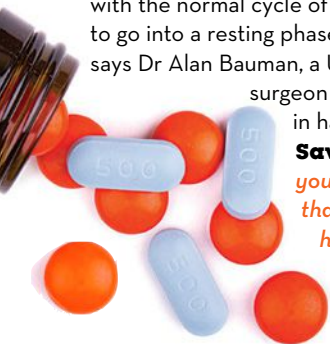
2

saboteur

medications

Some meds (like statins, anti-depressants, anti-anxiety agents and anti-hypertensive drugs) or hormones (like thyroid replacement drugs) can cause hair loss. "These can disrupt or interfere with the normal cycle of hair growth, causing hair to go into a resting phase and fall out prematurely," says Dr Alan Bauman, a US-based hair transplant surgeon and physician specialising in hair loss.

Save Your Strands: *Ask your doc about alternatives that don't have the same hair-loss reactions.*



3

saboteur

bad diet

"An iron, Vitamin D₃ or calcium deficiency can cause hair fall," says Dr Naresh Jain, consultant dermatologist, FMRI, Gurgaon. Moreover, when you don't eat well, your body directs its energy towards essential functions—like helping your heart and brain work—rather than growing hair.

Save Your Strands:

Eat fresh fruits, leafy greens, jaggery, paneer, lean meat etc. for a well-balanced diet. "You may also want to consult a dermatologist about hair supplements, as the absorption power of the gut reduces with age, thus rendering a nutritious diet insufficient to curb hair fall," adds Goel.





4

saboteur

hot styling tools

Scorching temps damage the protein that make up your hair and its protective cuticle. "Once the cuticle is damaged, the moisture balance is disrupted and your hair is more prone to breakage," says Bauman.

Save Your Strands: *Limit your hot tool usage—even your blow-dryer—to 2 or 3 times a week, and start with the coolest setting possible. Always apply a heat-protection spray, which creates a thermal barrier, to reduce friction. Try: TRESemmé Thermal Creations Heat Tamer Protective Spray, ₹730, amazon.in.*

Do you follow up your styling rituals with harsh hair sprays? If so, here's what you need to know: many of the products, especially those that promise to stay all day long, have alcohol in them, which damages the hair and makes it brittle.

5

saboteur

scratching your head

An itchy scalp (like that caused by seborrheic dermatitis) may result in hair loss due to trauma caused to the hair root by scratching, says Jain. Once the cuticle is damaged, the hair fibre is prone to breakage.

Save Your Strands:

Relieve the itch with a shampoo that contains selenium, zinc pyrithione or tea tree oil, like Himalaya Anti-Dandruff Shampoo, ₹70 upwards. If OTC products don't help, your doctor can prescribe an anti-fungal shampoo.





6

saboteur

tight hairstyles

If a tight ponytail, bun or braid is your go-to, beware: sporting these styles puts excessive tension on the hair follicles, damaging them and creating scars that destroy them permanently, says Doris Day, a US-based dermatologist specialising in hair health. This can lead to traction alopecia, a condition that permanently weakens the follicle and makes it impossible for hair to grow.

Save Your Strands: *Loosen up! Try wearing your hair down whenever possible (especially while sleeping; rolling around on a pillow can create even more friction). When you do tie your strands back, keep it soft—if it's pulling on your scalp, it's way too tight.*

For precious strands lost during the winter, blame steamy showers. Hot water dehydrates strands, leading to dry, brittle hair that's more prone to snap. "Not only are you washing your hair's protective oils down the drain, but the heat throws your scalp's pores into overdrive to keep up with oil production, which can damage the root and lead to additional shedding," explains Dr Ryan Welter, a US-based hair transplant surgeon. The solution? Take the temp down a few degrees. "Opt for a warm shower, and try to rinse your hair with the coolest temperature possible."

7

saboteur

ill-treating wet hair

Our strands are never more fragile—and prone to breakage—than when they're saturated with H₂O, since the protective cuticle is slightly raised. Brushing or combing locks in the shower, then following with aggressive towel-drying, create the perfect storm for snapping it off.

Save Your Strands:

"Avoid brushing your hair when wet," suggests Jain. You can minimise post-shower damage by combing before hair gets wet. Then, pat (don't rub!) your hair with a soft towel to dry.

Disguise AWAY

HAIR LOSS DOESN'T NEED TO BECOME A CONSTANT WORRY WHEN IT COMES TO LOOKING YOUR BEST. THESE TECHNIQUES CAN HELP YOU LOOK FABULOUS WITH THE MANE YOU HAVE.

» TAKE IT OFF

One of the fastest ways to create the illusion of more abundant hair is to cut it off and add strategic layers. Shorter hair tends to look healthier and have more volume, since it's not pulled down closer to the scalp by extra inches, says *Prevention* advisor and Mumbai-based celebrity make-up artist Clint Fernandes. "Choose a cut depending on your face shape. Layers suit women with a long face shape more than those with a round face shape. Your hairdresser should be able to guide you in getting the best cut possible," he adds.

» USE VOLUMISING HAIR PRODUCTS

Choose a volumising shampoo without sulphates, and follow it up by applying a

volumising mousse or spray into the hair, near the roots to lift them up. "This creates volume without any need for backcombing or other tricks that can damage the hair," says Fernandes. Try: TIGI Bed Head Sugar Dust Invisible Micro-Texture Root Powder, ₹1,379, amazon.in.

» USE VELCRO ROLLERS

After you're done washing and conditioning, let slightly damp hair set on Velcro rollers for an hour to get some volume. Don't have that much time? "Tie your damp hair into a top knot with a scrunchy, while you're on the go. Once you reach your destination, open your hair, flip your head and run your fingers through your mane," suggests Fernandes.

» COLOUR UP

Here's the upside of having to cover up greys: colour swells your hair's cuticle, making it bigger in diameter and lending extra volume, says George Papanikolas, a US-based hairstylist and colourist. Touch up roots once a month and highlights every 2 to 3 months to avoid weakening the hair by over-processing it, and aim a few shades lighter than your natural colour to make visible patches of scalp or a too-wide part less noticeable.



THE ELEMENTS

Although, 9 out of 10 times, your lifestyle and genes are the reasons why you're losing hair, don't discredit the role of these factors:

◆ Pollution

It's not only bad for your skin and lungs; but pollution also has an adverse effect on your hair. "It clogs pores on the scalp, and makes hair frizzy and fragile," explains Chhabra. Cover your head and hair when stepping out.

◆ The Sun

"Prolonged UV exposure causes the layers of the cuticle to weaken and break, resulting in brittle hair that can lead to hair loss," says Bauman. Cover up to protect your mop.

◆ Hard Water

Has shifting home made you lose hair? It could be the water. "Hard water tends to make hair dull and frizzy," says Chhabra. Before you lose more strands stressing about it, keep this advice from Jain in mind: "Give your hair some time to get used to the water. In most cases, the body gets accustomed to the change and the hair fall reduces."

◆ Chlorine

That cool early morning dip can dry the hair fibre and make it brittle. "Always oil your hair before you go swimming, and wear a cap during," suggests Chhabra.

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saboteur

birth control pills

Birth control pills force hair strands in the growing phase (anagen) to enter the resting phase (telogen), and thus shed in about 2-3 months, explains Chhabra. Moreover, when women with a genetic predisposition for hair loss take OCPs that are high in progesterone, it further aggravates the condition by introducing more androgens in the body, she adds.

Save Your Strands: *If your hair loss is characterised by a progressive widening of the 'part' or bald patches along the sides of your scalp, consult your ob-gyn and dermatologist about switching to low-androgen index birth control pills. "If it's a matter of hair fall, discontinuing the pill, after discussing it with your doctor, can help," says Chhabra.*

saboteur

not washing often

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So you skip a few days between washing. No big deal, right? Wrong! "Skimping on regular hair washes makes your hair brittle," explains Goel.

Save Your Strands: *You can skip shampoo for a day. But if it becomes a habit, product residue, dirt and oil can clog pores in the scalp. Wash your hair every 2 days, especially if you're sweating or using lots of hair products. To prevent dryness, try a sulfate-free shampoo like The Body Shop Rainforest Shine Shampoo, ₹ 795. *

Additional inputs from prevention.com



Food

Cook • Eat • Enjoy!

In Season... **Zucchini**

Get your green low-cal fix from this succulent summer squash. Cooking zucchini is easy, and it takes well to Indian spices. This veggie has many benefits – it is low in calories and high in magnesium, fibre, folate and Vitamin C. One cup of zucchini with skin delivers nearly 40% of the daily requirement of Vitamin C. Stir-fry, sauté, bake, grill or grate and add to salads.

How to buy: Choose medium-sized zucchini that is firm (with slightly prickly skin) and feels heavy for its size.

How to store: Fresh zucchini can be refrigerated for 5 days. Wash it thoroughly just before cooking it; try to retain the peel.

– By Pallavi Shankar





Zucchini Ribbon Salad

PREP TIME: 10 mins TOTAL TIME: 25 mins *Serves 4*

4-5 medium zucchini
1 medium red bell pepper, chopped
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp red raisins
 $\frac{1}{4}$ c sunflower seeds
 $\frac{1}{4}$ c chives, chopped
3 Tbsp olive oil
2 Tbsp lemon juice
Salt and freshly-ground pepper to taste

1. In a large bowl, whisk olive oil, lemon juice and red raisins. Season with salt and pepper. Keep aside.
2. Trim the ends of the zucchini. Using a vegetable peeler,

shave lengthwise into long, wide strips (that resemble ribbons).

3. Put zucchini ribbons in the bowl. Add chives, bell pepper and sunflower seeds. Toss and serve.

NUTRITION (per serving) 240 Kcal, 10 g pro, 18 g fat, 2 g sat fat, 12 g carbs, 4 g fibre, 1 g sugar

Barbecue Sticks

PREP TIME: 5 mins TOTAL TIME: 20 mins *Serves 4*

3 medium zucchini, cut into 1-inch-thick roundels
1 c chicken, sliced
1 c tomato, cut circular
 $\frac{1}{2}$ c onion, cut circular
1 Tbsp sesame oil
2 tsp olive oil
Salt, black pepper flakes, chilli flakes and oregano flakes to taste

1. Skewer 4 zucchini roundels and a few chicken, tomato and onion slices.
2. Brush zucchini and other veggies with sesame oil and season with salt and herbs. Grill both sides until tender.
3. Drizzle with olive oil and serve with yoghurt dip.

NUTRITION (per serving) 117 Kcal, 19 g pro, 8 g fat, 2 g sat fat, 6 g carbs, 1.5 g fibre





Grilled Zucchini Rolls

PREP TIME: 15 mins TOTAL TIME: 25 mins *Serves: 4*

3 medium zucchini, sliced into broad strips
1 Tbsp olive oil
½ tsp lemon juice
45 g low-fat paneer or cottage cheese, mashed
½ c rocket leaves
Salt and pepper to taste

1. Brush both sides of the zucchini slices with olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Keep aside for a few minutes.
2. Place zucchini on a pre-heated grill, until tender.
3. Put ½ tsp of the cottage cheese (paneer) mix about ½ inch from the

end of a zucchini slice. Add lemon juice. Top with some rocket leaves.

4. Roll up the slice and place it seam-side down on a platter.

NUTRITION (per serving)
76 Kcal, 6 g pro, 4 g fat,
6.14 g carbs, 3 g fibre

Veggie Boat

PREP TIME: 15 mins TOTAL TIME: 45 mins *Serves 4*

2 medium zucchini
2 Tbsp mustard oil
7-8 cherry tomatoes
1 c soya, minced
1 c onion, chopped
½ c dill, chopped
Salt to taste

1. Heat oil. Add veggies and soya. Sauté.
2. Season with salt and cook until tender.
3. Slice zucchini in half and

scoop out the flesh.

4. Drizzle the baking dish with mustard oil. Place veggie-stuffed zucchini.
5. Bake for 15 minutes in a preheated oven.

NUTRITION (per serving)
316 Kcal, 31 g pro, 9 g fat,
31 g carbs, 19 g fibre,
1.5 g sugar

—Nutrition counts from
 Swati Dwivedi





Fruitopia

Enjoy the flavour of fresh cherries, berries, apricots and more with recipes so delicious you won't miss the sugar, sat fat or calories!

BY LORI POWELL
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN KERNICK



Rustic Plum Pie

Recipe, p. 132

Mango Lassi Ice Cream

Recipe, p. 132





Granola Cherry Yoghurt

Recipe, p. 132



Blueberry Crumble

Recipe, p. 133





Apricot Bars

Recipe, p. 133

Rustic Plum Pie

PREP TIME: 25 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 1 hour + chilling time

Serves 8

Dough

- $\frac{1}{2}$ c low-fat cream cheese, at room temp
- $5\frac{1}{2}$ Tbsp unsalted butter, at room temp
- 1 tsp granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c wholewheat flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c all-purpose flour

Good source of
BP-controlling
potassium

Filling

- 6 fresh plums, halved, pitted and sliced ($3\frac{3}{4}$ c)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ c light brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp fresh ginger, finely grated
- 1 egg beaten with 1 tsp water

1. Prepare dough: pulse cream cheese, butter, sugar and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt in a food processor until well combined. Add flours. Pulse just until dough forms. On floured surface, form into a flat (1"-thick) disc. Wrap in plastic and chill for 30 minutes.
2. Heat oven to 180° C. Roll out dough on floured surface into 14" circle. Place on parchment-lined baking sheet.
3. Make filling: toss plums with brown sugar, flour, ginger and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt. Mound in centre of dough, leaving 2½" border. Fold dough over fruit, leaving centre exposed. Brush crust with egg. Sprinkle with some granulated sugar. Bake until fruit is tender and crust is golden, 35 to 45 minutes.

NUTRITION (PER SERVING) 238 KCAL, 5 G PRO, 29 G CARB, 2 G FIBRE, 16 G SUGAR, 12 G FAT, 7 G SAT FAT, 205 MG SODIUM

Has 30% fewer calories, 41% less sugar and 36% less sat fat than a traditional version

Mango Lassi Ice Cream

PREP TIME: 10 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 6 hours

Serves 2

- 1 c fresh mango pulp
- 1 c low-fat yoghurt
- 2 dates, deseeded and chopped
- 2 walnuts, chopped
- 2 pistachios, chopped; for garnish

Rich in
digestion-
boosting
pectin

1. Mix all the ingredients and blend until smooth. Pour into ice cream moulds. Freeze.
2. Garnish with chopped pistachios. Serve.

NUTRITION (PER ICE CREAM) 286 KCAL, 7 G PRO, 6 G FAT, 1 G SAT FAT, 35 G CARBS, 1 G FIBRE, 31 G SUGAR

Mango constitutes 40% of the total calories, that is full of naturally occurring sugar

Granola Cherry Yoghurt

PREP TIME: 25 mins

TOTAL TIME: 2 hours

Serves 2

- 2 granola bars
- 200 ml skimmed milk
- 50 g low-fat yoghurt
- 50 g fresh cherries
- 1 tsp ginger
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp sesame seeds, toasted

Packed
with sleep-
promoting
anti-oxidants

1. Boil milk. Pour in glass. Let cool.
2. Add granola bars to milk and let them soak well in the milk for a few minutes. Cool in refrigerator.
3. Chop 30 g cherries with ginger and purée the rest. Save 1 with a twig for garnish.
4. Whisk yoghurt until light and fluffy.
5. Add cherry purée and blend. Add chopped cherries.
6. Top granola in glass with cherry,

yoghurt and toasted sesame seeds.
7. Garnish with whole cherry. Serve.

NUTRITION (PER BAR) 551 KCAL, 15 G PRO, 22 G FAT, 2 G SAT FAT, 74 G CARBS, 5 G FIBRE, 8.7 G SUGARS

Granola constitutes 85% of total calories

Blueberry Crumble

PREP TIME: 10 minutes
TOTAL TIME: 55 minutes
Serves 6

3 c frozen blueberries
1 Tbsp lemon juice
6½ Tbsp all-purpose flour
5 Tbsp light brown sugar
½ c rolled oats
½ tsp baking powder
½ tsp cinnamon
4 Tbsp sliced almonds, toasted
3 Tbsp cold unsalted butter, cut into pieces

Good source of
bone-building
Vitamin K

1. Heat oven to 175° C with the rack in centre position. Coat a 8" x 8" x 2" or 9" x 9" x 2" baking dish with baking spray.
2. Toss blueberries with lime juice in prepared dish. Stir 1½ Tbsp flour and 1 Tbsp sugar. Toss with berries.
3. Stir together oats, baking powder, cinnamon, 5 Tbsp flour, 4 Tbsp sugar and salt. Chop 3 Tbsp almonds and stir into dry ingredients. Add butter and rub in with fingers. Sprinkle over blueberries.
4. Bake until golden brown. Let cool. Sprinkle with sliced almonds. Serve.

NUTRITION (PER SERVING) 321 KCAL, 6 G PRO, 11 G FAT, 4 G SAT FAT, 50 G CARBS, 5 G FIBRE, 38 G SUGAR

Has 46% fewer calories, 58% less sugar and 33% less sat fat than a traditional version

Apricot Bars

PREP TIME: 20 minutes
TOTAL TIME: 55 minutes
Serves 15

1¼ c rolled oats
¾ c all-purpose flour
½ c light brown sugar
¼ tsp cinnamon
6 Tbsp cold unsalted butter, cut into pieces
2 large egg whites
½ c dried apricot preserve
8 fresh apricots, halved, pitted and sliced
3 Tbsp pecans (or walnuts), chopped

High in
vision-
boosting
Vitamin A

1. Heat oven to 180° C with rack in the centre position. Coat a 9" x 9" baking pan with baking spray (with flour).
2. Combine oats, flour, sugar, cinnamon and ¼ tsp salt in a food processor. Pulse until mixture is gritty. Add butter and pulse until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add egg whites and pulse until mixture looks like wet sand. Press evenly and smoothly into the bottom of the prepared pan.
3. Spread top of the crust with apricot preserve. Arrange apricot slices in rows to cover top and sprinkle with chopped pecans (or walnuts). Bake until the crust is golden brown and set, 35 to 40 minutes. Let cool slightly before cutting into 15 apricot bars.

NUTRITION (PER BAR) 163 KCAL, 2 G PRO, 26 G CARB, 1 G FIBRE, 14 G SUGAR, 6 G FAT, 3 G SAT FAT, 53 MG SODIUM

Has 39% fewer calories, 42% less sugar and 50% less sat fat than a traditional version

— Nutrition counts by Swati Dwivedi

— Recipes from Prevention US; chef Kunal Kapoor, anchor, My Yellow Table; and Sandeep Panwar, Executive Chef, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, New Delhi



A Rain Garden

The monsoons can turn your backyard into a lush terrain. These tips help you make the most of this season.

BY MEGHNA KRIPLANI & KASHISH DUA



Make Full Use of Rain Water

Rainwater is the best kind of water to drench your plants in. Don't worry, you don't need a complicated system to get to it. It's as simple as placing indoor pots on the verandah or balcony. Alternatively, you could put out industrial drums and barrels under the rain to load up on water for your garden. (Keep the barrels covered with a lid when it's not pouring, to avoid mosquito breeding).

If you have the space, consider creating your own rain garden. Rain gardens collect runoff water from paved surfaces, and thus save you the effort of additional watering and help with the augmentation of ground water levels. Choose a low spot on your verandah—an area which gets the downpour from your roof or garage is a good choice. Next, dig a 4- to 8-inch hole with sloping sides. Plant your favourite foliage or flowers, and let them grow.

Prevent Soil Erosion

Gushing rainwater can cause the soil to pour out of small pots. Keep soil erosion in check by placing pebbles on the surface. Worried about the flower beds on your verandah? Proper ground cover will hold the soil better. So, plant as many small plants as possible. Though this will not prevent top soil erosion entirely, it will reduce it by some measure.



Don't Shoo Away Slimy Pests

The rains also bring with it a slew of visitors, such as toads, snails and ants. Before you lace your garden with insecticide, keep this in mind: many of these pests are harmless, and will do your green space a lot of good. For instance, snails in a compost pit can speed up the process of turning bio-degradable waste into manure. If you must rid your garden of them, go the chemical-free way. Prickly mulch (made of dried leaves and twigs) can keep slugs away; while placing pots on two bricks can save them from ants (they tend to disturb the soil around the plant).

Weed It Out

Weeds are unwanted plants that crop up after heavy rainfall, and rob your garden of the nutrients required to keep it flourishing. You can get rid of them naturally by pulling them out from the root. For deep-rooted weeds, make use of weeding knives and forks to get to the root.

Plant & Prune

'Tis the season to plant beauties like jasmine (all varieties of this fragrant genus thrive during the monsoon), bird of paradise, hibiscus, tecoma, heliconia and Roscoea alpina. It's also the time to prune plants like ornamental asparagus, bougainvillea and acalypha by snipping off a few branches to reduce the burden on the plant. You can pot these snippings to get new plants. 

Source: Aruna Ludra, author, *Four Seasons Gardening*; Rommel Shunmugam, a Gurgaon-based garden enthusiast; US Environmental Protection Agency

Home Street Home

Can't bring home a stray dog? Here's how you can show your love nonetheless.

BY KASHISH DUA

Every animal lover has gone through heartbreak at least once looking at the condition of stray mongrels in their neighbourhood. If you're one of them, then you know it isn't always possible to bring them home. Perhaps it's your pup that's holding you back or the family member who's allergic to dog fur or the lack of space in your 11th floor home that's a deterrent. Don't let this stop you from caring for at least a few out of the 24 million street dogs in India. We tell you how you can still be a good caregiver.

1. Begin with naming. Street dogs can be as friendly as your pet and equally in need of love. Naming a stray and calling out to it regularly can be the first move towards showing your concern. "I have been looking after almost 30 dogs in my neighbourhood for the last 10 years. I've named them all, and now they all respond to me when I call out to them," says animal-lover Sonali Aggarwal, associate professor, Delhi University. However, as it goes with other breeds, mongrels also take some time to get accustomed to the sound of the name. "It took the dog I look



after, about 2 months to get used to the name I'd given him. I had to train him, using food. So every time I fed him, I threw the name around, while patting him. Eventually, he started responding to it," says Sucheta Asthana, a Kolkata-based homemaker.

2. Take charge of their diet. The best way to befriend and win the loyalty of pariah dogs is by providing them proper nutritious meals and clean water at regular intervals instead of just scraps of food. "Street dogs face hazards of poisoning and swallowing glass pieces and/or nails that can damage their alimentary tract while hunting for food in garbage dumps," explains Dr Narendra Gandhi, director, Dr Narendra Gandhi's Pet Hospital, New Delhi. "You can save them from such dangers by feeding them boiled rice, moong dal khichadi, boiled eggs and/or seasonal vegetables."

3. Get them sterilised. According to the group Welfare of Stray Dogs, 2 dogs can multiply to a whopping 300 in 3 years. Their omnipresence and territorial habits make people fearful of them. The best way to save

Stray dogs are in as much need of love as your pet pup.



The WHO reports 18,000 to 20,000 cases of rabies every year in India. Vaccination against it will help lower attacks on humans and will save the strays from physical abuse meted out of fear of dog bites.

strays from brutality and starvation is by getting them sterilised under the Animal Birth Control Programme. You can get in touch with the municipality or NGOs in your city to ensure that the pariahs you spot are neutered, and returned to the same area to avoid any dog fights that can be caused by dislocation of these territorial animals.

4. Rescue them from illnesses. While you may not be able to give these animals all-day attention, you can give them the gift of a disease-free life by getting them vaccinated. "Stray mongrels can catch all kinds of air-borne diseases, infections from rodents and hepatitis from food which can equally put their lives at risk. The good news is that there are vaccines available for most of these illnesses," suggests Dr Gandhi. 🐾

SHELTERS YOU CAN TRUST

If you wish to show your concern for strays, these shelters can come to your aid.

New Delhi: Friendicoes, 011/2432-0707 **Chandigarh:** People For Animals, 0172/2680-280 **Chennai:** Animal Welfare and Protection Trust, 0/98409-39281 **Bengaluru:** The Voice of Stray Dogs, 1-800-3010-1901 **Kolkata:** Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 033/2236-7738 **Guwahati:** People For Animals, 0/94350-13328 **Mumbai:** People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, 022/4072-7382 **Pune:** ResQ, 0/93738-88500.

Postscript

What do you love the most about rainy days?

"I wait to see the parched, dried plants turn a fresh, glistening green. It's so soothing to the eye! And as it pours harder, I love to see creepers and plants bursting out of the pots and growing bigger every day."

—**Balaka Dasgupta, 65, Delhi**

"I love the fresh, earthy aroma that engulfs the air. That invigorating scent finds you, even when you're indoors."

—**Asha Chauhan, 47, Mussorie**

"I enjoy eating fresh corn with hot ginger tea on evenings when it rains. These are a few of my favourite things..."

—**Kailash Semwal, 33, Hyderabad**



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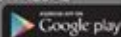
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